

BRITAIN AND ALGERIA, 1945-1965

By

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Abbreviations

AEF	French Equatorial Africa
ALN	National Liberation Army
ANC	African National Congress
AOF	French West Africa
CCE	Committee for Coordination and Execution
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNRA	National Council of the Algerian Revolution
CNRFA	National Council of the French Resistance in Algeria
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
CRUA	Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action
EEC	European Economic Community
FIDES	Economic and Social Investment and Development Fund
FFS	Socialist Forces Front
FLN	National Liberation Front
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GPRA	Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MNA	Algerian National Movement
MTLD	Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NKG	New Kenya Group
OAS	Secret Army Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPA	Political and Administrative Organisation
OS	Secret Organisation
PAC	Pan African Congress
RAF	Royal Air Force
SCUA	Suez Canal Users Association
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UDMA	Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UGTT	General Union of Tunisian Workers
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNO	United Nations Organisation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

Abstract

Algeria's achievement of independence in 1962, after a bloody war served as an inspiration to the rest of Africa still under colonial rule. As a result, many studies have been done on French colonial rule in Algeria, and the latter's resistance to it. But, these studies have not fully attempted to link the implications of French decolonisation of Algeria to British decolonisation of her African territories, hence this study attempts to fill this gap. The thesis is about Britain and the Algerian war, with particular reference to Britain in Africa. It deals with decolonisation and the "wind of change" and presents the history of North Africa in the context of Africa as a whole. From its beginning in 1954, the Algerian war has occupied a unique place in the history of decolonisation. Its repercussions for French colonial policy were followed with keen interest by the British, who like the French had a huge empire in Africa, and also had potential trouble spots of the magnitude of the Algerian quagmire.

The thesis begins with a description of the post-war international situation, in which America and the Soviet Union emerged as the two super-powers, while the resources of the old imperial powers of Britain and France did not match the growing needs of government in their colonial possessions. They were put on the defensive by nationalism in Asia and Africa, supported by American anti-colonialism. The outbreak of the Cold War and the fear of communism seemed to provide them with some justification for resisting demands for independence, but made America all the more anxious for the "end of empire," to win the battle of third world "hearts and minds." The thesis investigates the extent to which British and French colonial policies had an influence on each other during the period of decolonisation. Against this background, the thesis traces the history of the war in Algeria, 1954-62, and the post-war settlement down to 1965, together with the histories of French and British decolonisation in Africa over the same period, in order to follow the history of British concern with the problem. It shows how this concern was at its height under the Macmillan government, but came down to the promotion of British business interests after the end of the war, when Algeria's internal problems and continued dependence on France reduced the fear that it would seek to cause difficulties for the colonial powers in Africa.

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CHAPTER 1

SOURCES

In writing this thesis I relied on four broad sources of information namely, official British records at the Public Record Office, the British press, Parliamentary papers and the published secondary literature on the Algerian war. My main research base was London and travels were centred around the Public Record Office at Kew, Newspaper archives at Colindale, School of Oriental African Studies Library, Senate House Library, Institute of Historical Research, British Library and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Library. The purpose of this section of the thesis is to detail the kind of information that was discovered and how it was utilised in preparation of this study.

First, British government reaction to the Algerian war can be categorised into two parts, namely what transpired within Whitehall and how Algeria was presented and debated in the British legislature. In the Public Record Office this research benefited substantially from files that fall under the FO371 and PREM11 series. The former are Foreign Office political correspondence such as letters from British diplomatic missions in France, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and United States (Washington and New York respectively). The NATO Delegation was also a valuable source of information. In other words, Britain received first hand information about Algeria from a variety of diplomatic and military sources. The PREM11 series files are Prime Ministers's Office correspondence and papers. I classified the information from the above sources into three categories and treated it in the following manner. Firstly, was the original information from official sources such as consulates, or foreign official sources, for example, French government. Secondly, was what comments were made on the information in government circles or in the press; and thirdly, the action that was taken on the information, for instance, reports, statements of positions and effect or utilisation on policy decisions.

During the better part of the Algerian conflict, 1954 to 1960, Britain had in Paris as her Ambassador, a highly capable, efficient and competent man in Sir Gladwyn Jebb. Jebb does appear to have had close contacts within the French political establishment. His reports to London showed or indicated that he was on many occasions privy or briefed on highly top secret issues pertaining to French policy in Algeria. Even his support staff seemed to have been well-informed and connected in the Elysee Palace and the Hotel Matignon and Quai d'Orsay. When General Charles de Gaulle returned to power in May 1958, Jebb developed a highly professional and sophisticated relationship with him and de Gaulle respected and held the Ambassador in high regard because he always stood his ground in an argument or discussion. Through this association the British diplomat was able to extract quite a lot on the French leader's thinking of Algeria. The Paris Embassy reported to the Western and African departments or desks in the Foreign Office, while some information regarded as too sensitive was short-circuited to reach the Foreign Secretary instantly.

In Algiers, the British Consul-General Office was manned by R.F.G. (Rod) Sarell who

was also an outstanding diplomat. He reported to both the British Embassy in Paris and Foreign Office in London. His main sources of informants included the Algiers Residency and British people such as those in the Foreign Legion, while his American counterparts always passed crucial information to him on the Algerian situation. Sarell through these information rich sources was able to move from providing quarterly reports to monthly ones as there was a lot to write about. After Tunisian independence in March 1956 and the subsequent intensification of the struggle, the Tunis embassy under Angus Malcolm provided the Foreign Office with information on the war across the border. With the establishment in Tunis of the Algerian Provisional Government in exile in 1958, Malcolm's office followed every move within the FLN. Just as the Algiers Consulate, the Tunis office collaborated with their American counterparts in exchanging vital information such as Tunisian moves at mediation between the belligerents. In Washington, the State Department frequently passed essential information to the British mission there. The British delegation to NATO also listened to the reaction of the Alliance defence community and French official and military comments on Algeria. In addition, British military attache(s) in Paris frequently visited Algeria and reported on military aspects of the conflict and how the situation was likely to develop.

So, the information from all these diplomatic and military sources was distilled into coherent reports and summaries of the Algerian situation. These conclusions informed British official thinking of the trends of international opinion towards the Algerian issue, and how much opposition France was likely to face at the United Nations. Through this, London was able to frame the kind or nature of positions to adopt at these international fora. Also, more importantly the Algiers diplomatic mission always prepared for London annual review reports on the situation in Algeria. These were summaries which in a chronological fashion followed or reported on the major highlights or developments of a particular year on the Algerian issue. In most instances these annual reports covered the political and economic situation in Algeria. On the economic aspect, present and future British interests were at times discussed. All the information from this variety of sources was digested into reports which were circulated in Whitehall up to Prime Ministerial level. The nature of the reports or correspondence were always in response to or analyses of episodes in the course of the war. Beginning with the battle of Algiers in January 1957, through to the Sakiet Sidi Youssef incident in February 1958 onwards there are indications that there was growth in official British interest on events in Algeria. This was shown by the flow of information from the various diplomatic missions in North Africa, Western Europe and across the Atlantic.

Still under the official British sources were the Parliamentary papers which dealt with or covered the presentation of Algeria in the House of Commons. Opposition to colonial rule gained momentum in the 1950s and in most of the metropolitan countries it was political parties to the left of politics that often advocated the ending of colonial rule thus lending their support to the colonised peoples in their struggles. This was the case in Britain and France. In Britain the Algerian question was in most cases raised in the House of Commons by the Labour Party. This was in many instances in the form of questions, whereby the Opposition wanted the government to clarify its position on certain aspects or incidents of the conflict. Ministers were frequently taken to task to

state what Her Majesty's Government was doing towards the resolution of the conflict and which side they were supporting. From the British Parliamentary papers it is quite clear that the opposition Labour Party was fully in support of the Algerian nationalists' cause and viewed the issue as an international problem that could have serious ramifications for British colonial policy in some of her African colonies in British East and Central Africa, while it also had implications for NATO.

During the course of the war, at times demonstrations under the Labour Party's banner were organised in support of Algerian freedom fighters. Protests were made against certain brutalities or injustices committed by the French during the war. An example of increased Labour Party support for the Algerians was shown in November 1960 when one of the party's vociferous Members of Parliament Anthony Wedgwood Benn tabled a motion for debate in the House. Answers to these parliamentary questions or debate(s) throw insights into British policy which was supporting France albeit couched in diplomatic language which often raised more questions than answers.

The third source of information used in this research was the press. Newspapers are important in the sense that they inform the public on various issues. Through the press, government policies on contentious issues can be known and through its reportage, the press can be able to gauge the public mood or even shape public opinion on a particular subject. During the Algerian war Britain had and (still has) numerous newspapers. These were either daily or weekly publications. Newspapers inasmuch as they inform, can also display political leanings or orientation depending on their editorial policy, and their writings may be tendentious. In other words, newspapers can be to the left, right or liberal side of politics depending on the way they report news on particular issues.

Since this study is not about the Algerian war and the British press *per se*, the latter is used to see the extent to which it informed the British public on the war and what significance it attached to this conflict through its reportage. In terms of the usage of newspapers, the papers were not picked in any order of preference but the sampling was randomly done depending on how much they reported on the subject treated in the thesis. For the dailies, those found to be invaluable to this study were the *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian* or *Guardian*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Mirror* and *The Times*. In case of weekly periodicals, *The Listener*, *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* were found crucial to this study. Weeklies were important in the sense that they gave the gist of a particular event or story in that particular week and in most cases these were leading articles. Again in most instances the newspapers had special correspondents either in Paris or Algiers, or were sent on special assignments to report on particular subjects. Some of the notable correspondents who reported on the subject were Thomas Cadett (BBC Paris correspondent), Edward Behr (*Reuters* and *Time Magazine*), *New Statesman's* Francis Williams and Bickham Sweet-Escott of *The Listener*, to mention but a few.

What was persistent in all these papers was that they did not report on the war consistently. Episodes in the war that might be perceived as critical or important did not appear as such from one newspaper to another. Whereas incidents linked directly or

indirectly to the war such as the Philippeville massacre, Suez, battle of Algiers, Sakiet Sidi Youssef, collapse of the Fourth Republic, September 1959 De Gaulle's speech on self-determination of Algeria, week of the barricades, Evian accords, OAS counter-terrorism and the Boumedienne Coup of 1965 dominated front pages and were lead stories of some papers, in others they were relegated to the obscure middle pages of the papers or at times passed unnoticed or unreported. On balance there was an increase in the coverage of the war in the press. Generally, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Guardian* have tended to follow the Algerian story in every inch as it unfolded and often gave their editorial position on particular events or episodes. The sample of newspapers used in this study is generally representative of the whole British press.

The final sources of information used in this research was the published secondary literature in the period under study, which also extended to the general literature of British decolonisation in Africa, especially the "wind of change" period and its repercussions. The published secondary literature included books, journal articles or periodicals, memoirs and biographies. As for memoirs and biographies those that benefited this work were of people who through their actions were either directly or indirectly involved with events or the course of the conflict. In this regard the memoirs and biographies of Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Selwyn Lloyd, Iain Macleod, Charles de Gaulle, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and John Foster Dulles were consulted. In terms of books, those covering the period 1945 to 1954 featured Algeria in the general discussion of the French North African problem. Most of these covered issues relating to the direct belligerents or protagonists namely France and Algeria.

"Anglo-Saxon" literature began to appear in the late 1950s and culminated for this purpose with Alistair Horne's, *A Savage War of Peace* in 1977. These were in most instances books, political commentaries and newspaper articles in the form of talking points written by journalists who were able to penetrate the rebel front lines and had established some rapport with them. These were written by British and American journalists and academics. The significance of these sources was that they brought the war into the public domain in both Britain and America. These books covered a variety of themes relating to the war, such as Algeria's "nationhood," torture and human rights, terrorism and counter-terrorism, independence as opposed to different kinds of relationship to France or the West in general and on the whole concept of the revolution.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION : BRITAIN AND FRANCE AFTER WORLD WAR II

a. INTRODUCTION

The context of this thesis is the end of British and French empires especially in Africa. The purpose is to see how in this context Britain saw and reacted to Algeria in relation to her broader policy of African decolonisation. Both Britain and France had huge direct and indirect spheres of influence in different parts of the world. After the Second World War in 1945, a process began, gained momentum in the 1950s and accelerated in the 1960s. By 1965 vast areas that used to be colonies and protectorates under European powers had become politically independent entities determining their own destinies. This process alluded to above came to be known as decolonisation. Decolonisation as a concept has now become a controversial subject, mainly in relation to its meaning and what forces were at play that brought about this phenomenon, especially the speed with which decolonisation occurred. As a consequence of this, various schools of thought have advanced diverse reasons as to why decolonisation took place at the time it did. Arguments advanced hinge on what was happening in the metropolises and in the colonies, on public opinion in the mother countries, and on the changing economic and international balance of power in the world after 1945.

In order to address this controversy, an argument is made here that there is no satisfactory single explanation of decolonisation, but that a multiplicity of factors in the economic, political and military circumstances in Europe and the wider world, coupled with the growth of African nationalism, made this process inevitable. It is true that other factors weighed more heavily than others. The way the colonial powers reacted or responded to decolonisation varied from region to region, from colony to colony. Decolonisation in general, however, can be explained as the collapse since 1945 of the global system which sustained British and other European imperialisms. In this sense therefore, decolonisation is to be seen as the breakdown not just of colonial rule but of a much larger complex which might be called the "global colonial order."¹

b. The World Situation After 1945 to 1953

The United States joined the Second World War on the side of Britain in December 1941, as a direct consequence of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. Though Britain and America were allies in this global conflict, they had different colonial aims. Because of her history, there was a long tradition of anti-colonialism in American foreign policy, whereas Britain regarded colonies as part of her strength, and were to be maintained for the survival of her global power and influence. The post-war international situation was such that the United States and Soviet Union emerged as the two super-powers, while the resources of the old imperial powers of Britain and France did not match the growing needs of government in their colonial possessions. The post-war, bi-polar era in which the world divided into two opposing camps came to be known as the Cold War. Attack at

Pearl Harbor and the conclusion of the war ended American "isolationism." The United States now became active in world affairs especially in Europe and the strategy was to prevent any rival power from controlling its vast industrial resources.

America was the only power to gain economically from the Second World War. As a result of massive increase in wartime spending, the American Gross National Product (GNP) rose from \$88.6 billion in 1939 to \$135 billion in 1945. America's industrial output between 1940 and 1944 rose by 15 per cent a year.² United States economic superiority was reflected in her military might. According to Nicholas White, at the end of the war, America boasted of 12.5 million military personnel, 7.5 million of whom were stationed overseas.³ America's navy far outstripped that of Britain. The American airforce commanded the air with over two thousand heavy bombers and, above all, a monopoly of atomic weapons. This American military power was exemplified overseas by the establishment of a mass of military bases and the signing of security pacts in different parts of the globe.

But the United States power came up against an equally formidable opponent in the form of the Soviet Union. Having defeated the Germans, the Soviet Union had extended its own boundaries and the immediate post-war years witnessed the development of an informal Soviet empire of satellite states in Eastern Europe. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union's economy had been partly ruined by the war, her imposing military might could not be ignored. Though the Red Army was reduced by almost two-thirds after the war, it still had about 175 divisions, which were supported by tens of thousands of front-line tanks and aircraft. Added to this was the vast Soviet navy.⁴ All this made the Red Army the largest defence complex in the world, which after the war underwent a thorough modernisation programme.

In contrast to the United States and Soviet Union, Britain emerged from the war in dire economic and military circumstances. The war had exhausted most of British resources in its execution. During the war Britain liquidated over £1 billion of overseas investments to finance the war effort and at the same time the general foreign debt reached more than £3 billion.⁵ Post-war Britain faced a colossal balance of payments deficit, and the country was the world's largest debtor. In blunt terms, Britain emerged from the war, virtually bankrupt, and was dependent on American financial aid. After the war the United States gave Britain a loan of \$3.75 billion and Canada augmented this by \$1.25 billion.⁶ Britain's industrial base had drastically shrunk in spite of the manufacturing output being greater than those of Germany and France combined.

This British weakness was marked both economically and militarily. By 1950 Britain's total GNP was less than one-fifth of the United States and just over one-half of the Soviet Union. Militarily, by 1950 the United States had 1.38 million men in uniform and the defence budget stood at \$14.5 billion.⁷ The Soviet Union had 4.3 million military personnel with a budget of \$15.5 billion. Britain's military personnel and budget paled into insignificance when juxtaposed with the super-powers. For instance, the British defence budget stood at \$2.3 billion although there were still 680,000 persons under arms. Coupled with this was the fact that Britain still maintained enormous overseas

commitments in the empire and beyond.

This was even more true in the case of the other imperial European powers. Italy, Germany's ally, had been defeated by the US and Britain, and as a result lost her colonial possessions in Africa - Eritrea, Somalia and Libya although she was granted trusteeship of the former Italian Somalia from 1949-60. France, Belgium and the Netherlands, on the other hand, had been defeated by Germany. Although they had been liberated by the US and Britain, their economies were in ruins and their military capacity tiny even in the case of France. The task they faced of resuming the burden of empire in Africa and Asia was immense, and was certainly not helped by the formation of the United Nations.

In April 1945, the United Nations Organisation (UNO) was formed as a major international institution of the "new world order." This had a wider remit and membership than its predecessor, the League of Nations. Part of the UN's mandate was to assist in the rise of new states. Article I of the UN Charter stipulated that the general purpose of the organisation was "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples..."⁸ In 1948 this principle was expressed with greater force in the Declaration of Human Rights endorsed unanimously by the UN General Assembly. But the UN had its origins in the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, when the American President Franklin Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met on a battleship off the Canadian coast and issued a statement of their hopes for the future of mankind. The Charter especially Article III as a declaration of common Anglo-American principles, declared that the United Kingdom and the United States "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them."⁹ Interpretation of the above declaration soon proved to be an issue of contention. Whereas President Roosevelt, declared that the right of self-determination should apply to all peoples (and this view was supported by many people in the colonies), on the other hand, Churchill and Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French, insisted that Article III should apply only to the European countries liberated from the Axis powers, thus excluding the colonies. The United Nations Charter did become a kind of documentary expression of natural law and a global Bill of Rights. It served as a reference point in the development of the Third World bloc or Non-Aligned Movement. By 1955, most of Asia had achieved its independence and Africa was becoming militant in the quest for its own, the nationalists of Asia and Africa were still basing their demands firmly on the Charter. At the end of the first conference of the Third World States at Bandung in Indonesia in 1955, at the final communique stated that:

The Asian-African Conference declared its full support of the fundamental principles of Human Rights as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and took note of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all nations. The Conference declared its full support for the principles of self-determination of peoples and all nations as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and took note of the United Nations resolutions on the

*rights of peoples and nations to self-determination, which is a prerequisite of the full enjoyment of all fundamental Human Rights.*¹⁰

This movement for independence on the part of the colonial subjects of the European empires was favoured by the United States. This attitude, however, was to some extent reversal in favour of the imperial powers by the growing rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. From 1947 onwards the Cold War emerged as the dominant reality of international politics. In February 1947, the British government informed the Americans that they were terminating their financial aid to Greece and Turkey at the end of March because of Britain's domestic economic difficulties. These were trouble spots in the deepening Cold War. In fear of communist penetration, the United States moved in swiftly to fill the vacuum created by this contraction of British power. The United States then approved aid in the region of \$400 million for Greece and Turkey.¹¹ With the help of American aid and military advisers the Greek army eventually managed to defeat the Greek communist insurgents. On 12 March 1947 in a message to Congress, President Harry Truman outlined the Truman Doctrine, which was "to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."¹² He went further and stated that the world was dividing into two ways of life, democracy and totalitarianism. This effectively committed the United States to intervene against communist or communist-backed movements in Europe and elsewhere.

The next American move was to turn her energies to war-ravaged Europe. Returning from the March-April 1947 Foreign Ministers Conference in Moscow, the United States Foreign Secretary, George C. Marshall passed through Western Europe and was appalled by the economic and social distress that he witnessed. Most of the economies in Western Europe were suffering acute balance of payments difficulties, especially foreign currency such as the dollar to purchase food and raw materials from the United States. Their industrial and agricultural bases were shaky because of shortage of investment funds to generate more wealth and job opportunities. The severe winter of 1947 had compounded the problems by causing severe fuel crisis and a breakdown in communications. For instance, in Britain almost the whole industrial sector was paralysed.

Marshall and his associates feared that unless magnanimous American aid was made readily available to Western Europe, the economic repercussions would be of monumental proportions with reverberations even in the United States. Moreover, such economic difficulties, the Americans feared, might drive the inhabitants of Western Europe to turn to communism and the Soviet Union as their saviour. Marshall was quoted as saying that, "Stalin looked over Europe, and saw the best way to advance Soviet interests was to let matters drift," on the assumption that poverty and disease created "the kind of crisis that Communism thrived on."¹³ Marshall came to the conclusion that immediate action for European recovery was needed with the United States taking the leading role of providing the financial resources for this purpose. On 5 June 1947, Marshall called for a determined American effort to promote the economic revival of Europe and thus ensure the continued prosperity of the United States economy. He called on the European governments to confer amongst themselves and come up with

a joint recovery programme. If this programme was agreed to by most if not all the European states the United States would be in a position to offer financial support. Marshall's proposals were very much appealing to the British and French, who immediately seized on this opportunity. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and his French counterpart, Georges Bidault, convened a conference in Paris at the end of June. Invitations to this conference was extended to the East European countries, Soviet Union included.

The Soviet Union sent a high-powered delegation of economic experts led by the Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov. The Soviets soon rejected this idea of a joint European recovery programme which was to be run by financial institutions under the auspices of the United States. The Russians walked out of the meeting on 3 July 1947. Before they left, Molotov ominously predicted that the plan would split Europe into two groups of states. Despite this the Western European states drew up their Marshall Plan requirements, which after tedious and laborious negotiations were accepted by the United States. So, the Marshall Plan which would soon be launched covered only one part of Europe, namely the Western one. The Marshall Plan took months to be finally approved by the United States Congress. In March 1948, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act, the Marshall Plan. Initial Marshall aid allocated to recovery was \$5,3 billion. Over the next four years \$13 billion in American aid flowed into Western Europe especially in Britain, France and West Germany.¹⁴

As Western Europe gravitated towards recovery and prosperity because of American aid, the Soviet Union tightened its grip on eastern Europe and exploited the resources of the region, with the exception of Tito's Yugoslavia. As a result of the Marshall Plan, the division in Europe was not only political but economic as well. In March 1948, the governments of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg signed the Brussels Pact (Brussel Treaty Organisation) which provided for mutual military assistance in the event of aggression against any of the signatories. The Brussels Pact Powers promised to coordinate and plan their military defences in advance. Despite this treaty Western Europe was still militarily weak to deter any attack from the Soviet Union, so American material and psychological support was needed. So, the Brussels Treaty Organisation was a precursor to a more worldwide inclusive security pact.

The vanquished Germany was divided in 1945 into four zones each occupied by the victorious powers, America, Britain, France and the Soviet Union; even the city of Berlin was divided into four military zones. The three Western sectors of the city were isolated deep within the Soviet zone of Germany, with long road and rail communications of the Western zones. In March 1948, France agreed that her zone of Germany must be united with the Anglo-American zones to form a unified West Germany, albeit on federal lines but with limited powers. The Western powers also decided to introduce a new separate currency in their zones as part of the rejuvenation of the West German economy. The Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was angered by these Western unilateral actions, so he decided to hit back to force them to reverse their decisions. Between March and June 1948 Russia imposed a complete blockade of the Western zones of Germany.

Britain and America did not budge and showed their determination not to succumb to Soviet pressure. On 25 June 1948, both London and Washington began to airlift food and fuel requirements into West Berlin. The Western planes flew over the Soviet controlled airspace in Berlin and could have been easily shot at, but Stalin was wise enough not to provoke another war in Europe. Meanwhile, plans were on course in the West to form a transatlantic alliance. On 4 April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed. Signatories to this treaty were members of the Brussels Pact, United States, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Portugal, Norway and Italy but not Germany. The heart of the treaty was the pledge for mutual military assistance and that an attack on one of them was an attack on all. This was meant to be a deterrent to the Soviet Union and also to Germany. The North Atlantic treaty was formulated in accord with the United Nations Charter, specifically Article 51 which recognised the right of individual or collective self-defence.

On 12 May 1949, as a sign of Soviet admission of defeat, the Berlin blockade was lifted. Throughout all the twists and turns of the Cold War, the Russians were busy and secretly working on their own atomic bomb. The Soviets were helped in this adventure with uranium from mines in Czechoslovakia and the East German part they had occupied. American espionage failed dismally in following the Soviet progress on the bomb. America and the rest of the Western world were taken by surprise and horrified when it was revealed that the Soviet Union had in fact successfully tested an atomic bomb on 29 August 1949 in the steppes of Kazakhstan.¹⁵ This meant the end of America's monopoly of the atomic bomb. Happening almost at the same time was the Communist take over of power in the huge Asian State of China. These two events were indications to the Americans that communism was rampantly on the move and the heat in the Cold War was increasing. The United States could no longer insulate herself militarily and ideologically from the rest of the world.

In September 1949 the new state called the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) came into existence on the Western powers zone of Germany. It was followed the next month by the establishment of German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in the Soviet zone. The loss of America's monopoly of the atomic bomb prompted President Truman at the end of January 1950 to give the green light to the development of a more lethal hydrogen or super bomb, using an atomic explosion to generate a runaway thermonuclear reaction.¹⁶ By 1949 Europe was polarised into two camps, the capitalist Western world led by the United States and the communist Europe under the Soviet Union. Still by 1949 both super-powers had the atomic bomb and within five years they had tested hydrogen bombs. All these developments unleashed the nuclear arms race and showed how fragile the balance of power in the world was. For each super-power security was defined as superiority and each prepared itself for a moment of pre-emptive strike.

The Cold War battleground shifted from Europe to the Far East where the Chinese Communist Party took Beijing in October 1949. Korea had been recaptured from the Japanese in 1945. It was then divided at the thirty-eighth parallel as north and south Korea. The Soviets supported Kim Il Sung who ruled the north and the Americans

supported Syngman Rhee in the south. Both leaders of the two Koreas believed that the division was temporary, and each one of them wanted a united Korea under him. In June 1950 the communist North Koreans launched a surprise invasion of South Korea. The United States immediately ordered their naval and air forces in the vicinity to intervene and help the South Koreans. The Soviets reluctantly offered North Korea support or aid in the form of arms, ammunition and advisers. The United States also managed to secure United Nations backing for troops under its aegis to be used to defend South Korea. This United Nations mission was led by the American, General Douglas MacArthur. The United Nations force managed to score initial victories such as the recapture of Seoul, the capital of the south. Buoyed by this success the United States administration instructed MacArthur and his men to move deep into the north crossing the thirty-eighth parallel and to occupy the north. But he was warned that if there was the likelihood of Soviet or Chinese intervention he must withdraw. The United Nations and the United States had conflicting aims in this military expedition. Whereas the former's aim was to unite both Koreas, the latter saw its mission in the context of the Cold War, that is, to drive the communists out of the Far East.

The United Nations force managed to penetrate further into the north and went as far as close to the Yalu river which was near North Korea's border with Mao Tse Tung's communist China. This United Nations invasion of the north intensified the Cold War and President Truman ordered a major United States rearmament programme. Britain and France immediately followed suit. Fearing for their own security and what the American move might be after the conflict, Mao sent his troops in the guise of "volunteers" to help North Korea.¹⁷ The Russians now began to have cold feet once they realised how deep American involvement was in the war. The Chinese involvement now tipped the scales in favour of the North Koreans. The United Nations force was pushed further back to the south until they occupied their positions at the start of the conflict. MacArthur demanded that the United States use atomic bombs on China. Britain dissuaded America from such action, arguing that if carried out it would bring in the Soviet Union and the conflict would be global.

The Korean War ended with over a million in each of the north and south having been killed. Nothing was achieved by this internecine war as both north and south Korea remained divided, the former "Stalinized" and the latter under a corrupt regime propped up by Washington. The formal armistice ending the conflict was signed at Panmunjom in July 1953. As in Europe, the Cold War escalated in the Far East and moved to another heated level. It is within the context of the above discussion of the world situation after 1945 to 1953, that we can locate the British and French empires, their resilience if any, resistance to demands for independence by their colonised people in Asia and Africa. The post-World War II super-power rivalry created by the Cold War made America more anxious to end both the British and French empires in order to win the battle for the third world "hearts and minds." But at the same time, these empires were seen to provide a first line of defence against the expansion of the Communist bloc. Korea was only third in line as a "hot Cold War," after Indo-China and Malaya, where the French and British were involved in the defence of their empire against colonial rebellions led by Communists and backed by the Soviet Union and China.

c. The British Empire to March 1957

By the end of the Second World War in 1945, Britain still presided over the largest empire that was spread all over the world. In the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean, Britain ruled over India, Ceylon, Aden, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus. The African territories included Nigeria, Gold Coast, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, British Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland.¹⁸ In East and South-East Asia, British possessions encompassed Hong Kong, Malaya, Burma, Singapore, and parts of Borneo. In the Pacific, Britain administered Fiji, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and the Solomons. In the Caribbean, Britain ruled over Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guyana, British Honduras, the Leewards and Windwards, and the Bahamas, and in the Atlantic, Bermuda.¹⁹

The Second World War had devastated the British economy and Britain was in financial ruin. There was the thinking in London that in order for Britain to revive her economy she had to develop the colonies in order to achieve this feat. The gloomy economic picture of post-war Britain was summed up by the renowned economist John Maynard Keynes when he said the country was headed for a "financial Dunkirk" during peacetime.²⁰ Britain was highly dependent on American aid after the war. Despite these post-1945 economic woes, British policy makers did not lack the will to maintain both the empire and Britain's role as a global power. In other words, the post-war British leaders were committed and determinedly so, to creating a "third force" in world politics, that is, to expanding Britain's power to equal the United States and Soviet Union. One way of achieving this, argued the advocates, was by combining the resources of Western Europe, the Dominions (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the Irish Free State) and the Afro-Asian colonies under British leadership.

In Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's words, Britain had the material resources in the colonial empire, and if she developed them, would achieve the British objective, to make sure that London was not subservient to Washington and Moscow.²¹ So, the general view within Whitehall on British decline was that the trend could be reversed and that the "empire" could play a central role in terms of economic and political reforms to be embarked upon. It was hoped that the colonies would save the British economy through a protectionist system, and specifically through the exploitation of tropical territories. For instance, Africa which was rich in foodstuffs, minerals, and essential raw materials was to be heavily utilised to help the mother country. It was also hoped that as the colonies resources were harnessed there would be a "trickle down effect," hence the living standards of the indigenous or colonised people would be improved. Since the colonies were to be developed not only to help Britain and the local people, but to sustain British global power, it was decided that more money had to be spent in this endeavour. London enacted the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. The Act provided £120 million for the development of tropical agriculture, forestry, fisheries, education, water supplies, irrigation and transport in the African colonies.²² Also after 1945 there were state-led development projects aimed at harnessing the economic

potential of the colonial empire. The most infamous one was the East African Groundnuts Scheme in Tanganyika. Initial proposals of the scheme was the cultivation of one million acres of land in Tanganyika. Proponents of the scheme argued that it would result in a worldwide solution of shortage of edible oil, margarine, cooking fats and soaps.²³

The scheme was finally approved by the British Cabinet in January 1947 and was taken over in April by the newly established agency called Overseas Food Corporation. Despite warning from experts about the ecological environment, the likely costs of production and transport, the availability of labour at the appropriate season, and the limited benefits that would accrue to the Tanganyikans, the scheme went ahead with disastrous results. Another failing project was the Overseas Food Corporations attempt to establish a large poultry farm in the Gambia to produce eggs. The Gambia project failed to produce either eggs for the British housewife or any notable benefits for Gambians. These two schemes are archetypical failures of post-war colonial development.

British colonial development attempts in 1947 coincided with the Cold War emerging as the dominant reality of international politics. The Cold War generally worked to the advantage of the British Empire. Despite America's tradition of anti-colonialism, she buoyed up the British Empire for cold war purposes. According to W.R. Louis and R. Robinson, the British Empire was temporarily "preserved" as part of an "Anglo-American coalition."²⁴ By the end of 1947 both the State Department and Foreign Office were agreed that the greatest danger was the Soviet Union and Communism. So, under President Truman, American foreign policy objectives shifted from imperial dismantlement to the containment of Soviet communist expansion. The United States eased the pressure for decolonisation in return for assurances that the British would modernise as well as democratise the Empire. The Cold War thus gave the British empire an extended lease of life. For example, in Malaya, Washington appreciated the British role in 1950, contending that London was fighting a war against communist insurgents aided and abetted by Russia and China. At the same time the colonial regime in Malaya was earning hard currency (dollars) from rubber and tin exports. This money was used to cushion the British domestic economic position, hence Britain's ability to assist in the resistance to communism in Europe. The Americans, therefore while still anti-colonialist and committed to decolonisation, did not want to alienate their NATO allies such as Britain by hurrying the pace.

British policy-makers after the war did also recognise that in order to preserve the benefits and potentials of empire intact, political relationships between coloniser and colonised would have to change. Implementation of political change in Africa after 1945 was presided over in London by a partnership between a politician and a senior civil servant : Arthur Creech Jones, Labour's Colonial Secretary from 1946 to 1950, and Andrew Cohen, the socialist head of the African division in the Colonial Office. By September 1946, colonial office officials such as Cohen were conscious of the need for a clear policy based on the political advancement of colonial peoples. It was argued that elements of self-government would meet African and Asian aspirations which had been

given some impetus by the war. Political development in the colonies would make imperialism to look more progressive and insulate it from international criticism from the United Nations or United States. At the same time it was believed that giving certain political rights to the colonised people would equip them for social and economic development.

The Colonial Office thinking was that the central plank of prewar colonial administration, indirect rule, was to be modified. In each colonial territory, a controlled and orderly transfer of power was envisaged. This would entail a staged progression through elected local government, to elected majorities in central legislative assemblies and finally to cabinet government on the Westminster model. In Africa, this political advancement was conceived by London as a gradual process to be presided over by the colonial authorities. The colonial policy was aimed at guiding the colonial territories to responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensured that the people concerned enjoyed a fairly good standard of living and freedom from oppression from any source. The ultimate goal was self-government which was still considered to be decades away from accomplishment.

Colonial Office argued that any premature withdrawal would culminate in anarchy, Soviet communist penetration, totalitarianism and more importantly loss of British influence. Through all this, the key element in colonial political change was in the long term, the creation of a multiracial Commonwealth to preserve British world economic and political influence. The Commonwealth then was a free association of self-governing states linked together by common cultural, economic and strategic interests. What also featured in the immediate post-1945 colonial policy was the need to federate groups of colonial territories into larger and stronger political units to facilitate economic development, create strategic power blocs, prepare the political and administrative ground for eventual transfer of power and reduce the vulnerability of small states to communist takeover.

The above scenario gives a general picture of how the post-war (1945-1951) Labour government perceived empire, and even subsequent Conservative governments which would carry out most of the decolonisation process operated within the parameters or framework laid down by their Labour predecessors. Although the above scenario tends to present the subsequent British decolonisation as a pre-planned and orderly process from London, it is only part of the whole story. Pressures in the colonies and at the international level have to be taken into account; Britain was by no means in control of events during the decolonisation era.

India and Africa

One of the most important achievements of Clement Attlee's Labour government of 1945-1951, and of His Majesty's last Viceroy for India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, was the granting of India its independence. India was Britain's most important dependency in Asia. During the course of the twentieth century India had received measured amounts of internal self-government. The 1935 Government of India Act proposed eventual self-

government for India as a Dominion. Moreover, under the new constitution introduced in 1937 the main nationalist party the Indian National Congress, controlled the governments in a majority of the Indian provinces. The outbreak of the Second World War disrupted and complicated any smooth transfer of power. In 1939, Congress ministers resigned from government in protest at India's inclusion in the war against Germany without India's consent. In 1942 Congress launched the "Quit India" campaign,²⁵ aimed at the British. The "Quit India" campaign was immediately suppressed and Congress leaders were incarcerated for the entire period of the war. But, Britain had still in 1942 promised India post-war independence. When the Labour government came to power in July 1945 it pledged to carry out this wartime promise to India, that is, independence. So, by the end of the war in 1945, Indian independence was on the horizon. Things became tough for the British government in December 1946 to February 1947 when critical decisions had to be made because of the severe winter that resulted in coal shortages, cuts in fuel and electricity and limited supplies of food and milk. As stated earlier Britain decided to stop aid to Greece and Turkey, and took steps to submit the Palestine question to the United Nations. Most important of all, was the British government decision on 13 February 1947 to transfer power in India by June 1948.

In March 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten arrived in India as the British Viceroy of India. His brief was explicitly enunciated. The Indians were to agree on a new constitution by the end of June 1948, failure in this regard would mean that Britain would have to arrange whatever hand over might seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.²⁶ Though Mountbatten was able to convince Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the Hindu-dominated Indian Congress of his good faith, matters were complicated by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League. Jinnah professed to speak for the close to one hundred million Muslims. He oriented the League around the slogan *Pakistan*, "land of the pure."²⁷ It is still debatable whether Jinnah really wanted the establishment of a separate state. Communal violence in the course of 1947 meant that Mountbatten speeded up the pace of British withdrawal by bringing the date forward to August 1947. In mid-August 1947 two independent countries namely India and Pakistan were created. The Commonwealth was reformed so that it could accommodate countries such as India, no longer the exclusive club of only white dominions. The following year Britain decided to withdraw from Palestine. India's independence was not meant to be a sign of imperial decline but to enhance the empire's efficiency. It was not intended to be repeated elsewhere, but in reality India's independence did not go unnoticed in Africa.

The economic conditions in Africa remained appalling even after the Second World War. So, after 1945 demands for colonial economic development were intensified. Colonial agricultural officers were appointed so that they could intervene by improving the local population's peasant production methods. These colonial interventions were undertaken in East and Central Africa. For example, farmers were to construct terraces to counter soil erosion, reduce cattle stocks, enforce veterinary controls and grow new famine relief crops. Many of these required intensive labour and Africans resented these reforms. In Kenya, for example, the Kikuyu peasant families were required to devote two mornings per week to the construction of terraces as part of communal labour scheme. This led to disaffection which culminated in rural disturbances in 1947. Unemployment, shortage of

housing, destitution and expulsions of “squatters” around Nairobi served to compound matters. Local politics became increasingly radicalised as moderates were bypassed by militants in the violent underground movement known as Mau Mau. Secret oath-taking ceremonies bound peasants in the movement and led to open armed rebellion at the end of 1952.²⁸ Thus in place of planned evolution towards self-government and ultimate independence, a full-scale colonial war broke out, a major, and most important exception to the general picture of decolonisation in the British Empire. A large British force was despatched to Kenya to put down the rebellion.

In Central Africa, mainly in Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland the same agricultural reform policies were introduced on a far larger scale. Evictions of “squatters” and their livestock was carried out and the region witnessed the “second wave of colonial invasion” by immigrant settlers after the war, especially Southern Rhodesia which already had a sizeable number of vocal white settlers. The regional political map was further shaped by events further to the south where the white supremacist Nationalist Party led by Daniel Malan won the elections in South Africa and espoused the policy of racial discrimination called *apartheid*. There was growing fear in London that South Africa was likely to export her policies to the north and particularly to Southern Rhodesia.

Debate began in 1948 in London among those in charge of colonial policy that a closer union of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland must be attempted. It was assumed that this union would be more efficient economically and administratively and create some form of racial partnership. As one white colonial politician Godfrey Huggins, indiscreetly revealed the partnership would be that of horse and rider. The Conservative government that came to power in 1951 inherited Labour government’s blueprint federal scheme for Central Africa. Despite African protestations, the colonial government went ahead with the scheme. In September 1953 the three territories of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi) were amalgamated into a union called the Central African Federation of which Huggins was the first Prime Minister. The aim was to create a multiracial society, in contrast with the *apartheid* of South Africa and to establish an economically viable entity that would benefit both Europeans and Africans, but the latter viewed it with suspicion as an attempt to reinforce white domination. Malawi was to provide the Federation with cheap labour, Zambia with revenue from the huge copper resources, and these were to be used to build up the industrial and agricultural economy of Southern Rhodesia’s white settlers.²⁹ In other words, it was believed that the three territories’ economies complemented each other. Administration of this grouping of states differed from the metropole. Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were the responsibility of the Colonial Office, whereas the Commonwealth Relations Office had corresponding and overlapping responsibilities for the Federation and the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia. The obvious result was that there was friction between the two offices in executing colonial policy in relation to these territories. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of February 1953 on self-determination in the Sudan prepared the way for the evacuation of British troops in Egypt. Britain withdrew her troops in the Canal Zone in 1954 and the transfer of power in the Sudan finally took place in January 1956.³⁰

Ghanaian Independence

The two leading West African colonies under the British were Ghana and Nigeria. Ghana was considered a model African colony. In 1946, Britain introduced a new constitution for the Gold Coast. The aim was to bind together the coastal and inland regions, so that this could provide larger representation for the local people. This was also to be one of the early steps to achieving self-rule which was still thought to be many years away. As late as 1947 Ghana and Nigeria were still believed to be decades away from attaining independence. In a paper presented at the African governors conference in 1947 by Andrew Cohen he stated that :

*In West Africa internal self-government cannot be achieved until territorial unity has become a reality, sufficient numbers of Africans have emerged qualified by their training and character to manage their own affairs on a territorial scale and the political leaders have become representative of and responsible to the people.*³¹

The Cohen paper went further and stated that :

*...in the Gold Coast, the territory where Africans are most advanced politically, internal self-government is unlikely to be achieved in much less than a generation.*³²

In August 1947, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed with Kwame Nkrumah who had just returned from studies in America and a sojourn in Britain as its general secretary. The UGCC was mainly formed to campaign against the new constitution. It also demanded self-government in the shortest possible time.³³

Accra, the capital of the Gold Coast was bedevilled by the post-war economic and social problems. Housing conditions were very bad. Demobilised soldiers exacerbated the already dire unemployment situation. Moreover, retail prices of imported consumer goods were exorbitant. In January 1948, the Africans decided to boycott the entire European import stores. The shopowners were not moved and prices remained unaffordable. The critical moment took place on 28 February 1948 when a protest march of ex-servicemen was fired upon by the colonial police. Two people were killed as a result. Then the riots spread from Accra to Kumasi in the interior and elsewhere. Eventually the death toll reached twenty-nine. The riots appear to have been spontaneous. The Governor Sir Gerald Creasy declared a state of emergency.

The Colonial Office responded by appointing the Watson Commission of Inquiry.³⁴ The terms of reference of the commission were "to inquire into and report on recent disturbances in the Gold Coast and their underlying causes; and to make recommendations on any matter arising from their inquiry."³⁵ Every aspect of colonial government's policy came under severe criticism in the Commission's report. The Commissioners concluded that in the conditions existing today in the Gold Coast a substantial measure of reform was necessary to meet the legitimate aspirations of the indigenous population. In 1949 Nkrumah and his followers formed their breakaway Convention Peoples Party (CPP) and in January 1950, the party embarked on a campaign of "positive action" for self-government now.³⁶ Strikes, violence and looting ensued.

A state of emergency was declared and arrests followed (Nkrumah included). But elections were held in 1951 and the CPP won convincingly. The new governor, Charles Arden Clarke who had served in Sarawak in Southeast Asia and witnessed the communist insurgency there, released Nkrumah from prison to become without delay Ghana's Leader of Government Business. There now followed a period of power-sharing "dyarchy" between African ministers and colonial officials in which the British hoped to moderate and contain nationalism.³⁷ The colonial authorities subjected Nkrumah and CPP to two further elections, one in 1954 and the other in 1956. The CPP passed both these tests. The Gold Coast was granted independence on 6 March 1957 and renamed Ghana with Nkrumah as first Prime Minister.

The advance of Ghana to independence was not meant to be a model to be followed by the immediate independence of other colonies. But, Nkrumah prophetically insisted that Ghanaian independence was not a mere merit award for a "model colony," but a turning-point in the history of the continent.³⁸ Africans elsewhere soon signalled agreement when they started to demand what Ghana had got. Nigeria with the largest population in Africa was granted independence in 1960 after constitutional arrangements were made to overcome the great diverse social and ethnic factors in the country. Sierra Leone followed closely behind, moving into independence in 1961.

d. The French Empire to November 1954

At the end of the war France controlled the second largest empire in the world, second only to that of Britain. In North Africa, France's possessions were Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In French West Africa (AOF), she had control over Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Soudan, Niger, Dahomey, and in French Equatorial Africa (AEF) her colonies were Gabon, Congo, Oubangui-Chari (now the Central African Republic). Paris boasted of one outpost in eastern Africa, Djibouti or French Somali Coast. In the Indian Ocean, France ruled over the enormous island of Madagascar and the small archipelago of the Comoros. She had also gained control over part of the former German colony of Togo and the German protectorate, Cameroon. These were consigned to her after the First World War under mandates from the League of Nations. Britain also had control of part of these two countries. In the Pacific, France was in charge of Tahiti, most famed of Polynesian islands. Further West of the Pacific in the Melanesia, she ruled over New Caledonia and the loyalty islands. In Indo-China, France ruled over Vietnam which was composed of three regions Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina. Still in Southeast Asia, France's control extended to the harbours of Haiphong and Saigon. To the west of Vietnam, France's possessions were Cambodia and Laos.

The French Union

The French empire was renamed the French Union in 1946 as a new start for France itself after the war. Beginning with the Brazzaville conference of colonial administrators in January 1944, post-war France was shaped. A final declaration at this conference stated that the goals of the work of colonisation accomplished by France precluded any idea of

autonomy or any possibility of evolution outside the French bloc of the empire and that self-government though still in the distant future had to be avoided. In other terms, post-war leaders of France were clear about their stand towards the empire, that is, they had to tighten their grip and hold on the empire. Early in 1946 representatives of France and those from her dependencies met in Paris to draw up the constitution. Prominent African deputies at this gathering were Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, Ferhat Abbas of Algeria, Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Cote-d'Ivoire and Lamine Gueye of Senegal. Several measures were adopted in 1946, mostly at the instigation of the colonial deputies and these changed the status of the indigenous people in the empire. For example, legislation introduced by Houphouet-Boigny on 11 April 1946 outlawed all forms of forced or obligatory labour. The Lamine Gueye law of 7 May 1946 made all French "subjects" in the empire French "citizens" though without giving them equal rights to metropolitan citizens or French settlers overseas, or depriving them of their traditional civil status.³⁹ An increasing number of colonial subjects were granted the vote and allowed to exercise it repeatedly. There was also legislation that established the Economic and Social Investment and Development Fund (FIDES) which was to provide the colonies with financial aid to help their post-war economic recovery.

The constitution of the Fourth Republic was adopted on 28 October 1946 and it established the French Union. The preamble of this new constitution stated that France intended to lead the colonial peoples to the freedom to administer themselves and direct their own affairs democratically, avoiding any system of colonisation founded on arbitrariness.⁴⁰ France was to form with the overseas people a Union founded on equality of rights and duties without distinction of race and religion. The Union was composed on the one hand, of the French Republic which was made up of metropolitan France and the overseas departments and territories. On the other hand, it was made up of associated territories and states. The Black African colonies of French West Africa (AOF) and French Equatorial Africa (AEF) thereby became overseas territories while the right to elect deputies to the National Assembly in Paris was extended from the citizens of the Four Communes of Dakar, Gorée, Rufisque and Saint Louis to a limited number of electors elsewhere in the territories. But these were very few when compared to the number of deputies from the metropole. This was intended to be so, so that their influence could be minimal and not influence or dictate the laws affecting French citizens proper. Cameroon and Togo became associated territories and Indo-China, an associated state. Morocco and Tunisia were to achieve internal autonomy whereas Algeria was excluded since it was classed as part of France.

Paris domination of the Union remained. France was the principal member, the French president was the president of the Union. The Union assembly was separate from the French parliament and had consultative rights only; its advice could be ignored. Assemblies were set up in each of the former overseas colonies. There was also the establishment of dual electoral colleges, one elected by European residents, the other by indigenous voters. Under the Union, the AOF with Togo had to send ten representatives to the French Constituent Assembly, AEF four, Madagascar four, and Cameroon two. Foreign affairs, defence and other economic matters were still to remain under the control of France. All these reforms introduced under the French Union, albeit the result of

demands for change, were intended to stifle any budding nationalist sentiments, so that France could maintain and preserve her sphere of influence in a rapidly changing world, in which climate of international opinion, exemplified by the United Nations Charter, dominance of two super-powers, United States and Soviet Union and later the People's Republic of China, was opposed to old-style, unreformed colonialism.

Indo-China / Vietnam

In 1941 the Vietnamese nationalist, Ho Chi Minh founded the guerrilla movement called Viet Minh. France had in 1946 entered into agreement with Ho Chi Minh for some form of Vietnamese independence within the French Union. France failed to honour this pledge, and set up instead a separate autonomous government in Cochinchina and southern Annam under their collaborator Emperor Bao Dai. This move angered Ho Chi Minh since his struggle had always been for the independence and unification of Vietnam. The French still hoped to reconquer the northern regions of Tonkin and Annam or continue to prop up a friendly regime in the south. Ho Chi Minh began negotiations with the French in Paris in July 1946, but failed to bring about a satisfactory accord on the question of unification. The talks went into recess and it was agreed that they should begin at the start of 1947. In the meantime, the French decided to try to reconquer the north by force. On 23 November 1946, the French issued an ultimatum to the Viet Minh to evacuate Haiphong. On 29 November 1946, the French navy vessels intercepted a Chinese boat carrying contraband petrol into the harbour of Haiphong. Vietnamese nationalists under Ho Chi Minh's command fired on the French ships.⁴¹

Haiphong now became a military battleground with the French and Vietnamese forces attacking each other and resulting in thousands of deaths on both sides. This was the start of the Vietnamese war of independence. In December 1946, fighting spread to the capital of Tonkin. Warfare continued for the next four years. By 1950 French colonial forces are said to have counted 56 000 Frenchmen, 35 000 Vietnamese soldiers, 25 000 North Africans, 18 000 Legionnaires and 15 000 black Africans.⁴² At the beginning the French had the upperhand because of firepower and their sophisticated weapons. The Vietnamese advantage was their knowledge of the terrain. They began to win broad support from their countrymen and this motivated them to mount sustained guerrilla warfare. The Viet Minh used unsophisticated methods in deploying their men, and superior French technology of aerial reconnaissance failed to detect them. They created networks of intelligence-gathering, including many double agents who ostensibly worked for the French.⁴³ Ambushes were carried out on French convoys and military bases.

The victory of Mao in China in 1949 provided the Viet Minh with a new source of support. The Chinese provided the Vietnamese with armaments and this enabled them to carry out both conventional and guerrilla warfare attacks. The French now began to run out of luck as they found it difficult to find new Indo-Chinese recruits, and could not deal with the guerrilla tactics so successfully employed by the Viet Minh. There were desertions among soldiers and sailors. As the bad news began to reach home French public opinion turned hostile and even within the different political parties more and more loud voices could be heard calling for French withdrawal. The French were now

immersed in a war which they seemed to have no exit strategy.

As the Cold War intensified with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, this added a new phase to the Indo-Chinese war. As the Chinese came to the aid of the Viet Minh, the Americans came to the assistance of the French, but with the stated aim of a free, independent but pro-Western Vietnam. The United States heeded French requests and provided them with millions of dollars of aid and equipment in the execution of the war. The war now moved from being one of control of a colony to being a defence of the free world represented by France and the South Vietnamese government, against revolutionary Viet Minh and communist China. In other words, the war was now ideological, and the "hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese were at stake. As the Korean war moved to some form of resolution in 1953 because of a stalemate, the French drifted further into misery in Vietnam. The Viet Minh had made some territorial gains on the battlefield as they now controlled almost all of the northern region of Tonkin.

At the close of 1953, the French forces made a final attempt to turn the tables by occupying Dien Bien Phu, which they intended to turn into a base behind enemy lines. Dien Bien Phu turned out to be the French last stand and graveyard. Ho Chi Minh's fighters surrounded the French positions which were isolated from the outside world, only parachute landings provided the link with the outside world. On 7 May 1954, the Viet Minh captured Dien Bien Phu and the French surrendered. The future of Vietnam was soon settled at a conference in Geneva. The Geneva conference divided Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel. Ho Chi Minh ruled the north and Bao Dai had a shortlived reign in the south. Other recommendations of the Geneva conference such as the calling of elections under international supervision to decide the future of both Vietnams were not implemented. Cambodia and Laos were now recognised as separate independent states by the Geneva gathering.

The last French soldiers withdrew from Indo-China in 1955. The Indo-Chinese war meant that France lost her empire in Southeast Asia. The vacuum created by the departure of the French was filled by the United States which now protected South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos against communist penetration as Ho Chi Minh was entrenched in the north. The death toll in this conflict was estimated at between 400 000 and 500 000.⁴⁴ The morale of the French Army was drained away by this war and this contributed to the political instability that characterised the Fourth Republic in the 1950s. Also, the war was a clear failure of the French Union since it failed to keep one of its associated states within its fold.

e. Conclusion

The post-war international situation as discussed above shows that Germany was no longer the threat to world peace and stability. The new threat to world peace and stability was declared to be communism. The dominance of the world by two super-powers would only serve to polarise the world still further. In this bi-polar world, Britain as well as France found that their power had drastically declined and needed to be resuscitated. In this endeavour their empires were to play a central role. The super-powers rivalry

resulted in the cold war, which was the struggle for ideological and military dominance of the world either by the United States or Soviet Union. Despite their history of anti-colonialism, the cold war meant that the United States had to come to the rescue of her European imperial allies (Britain and France). For Britain and France their empires now came to serve as sources of international political and military strength in this post-war era.

In both the British and French empires, social and economic development was carried out in order to stabilise colonial rule, through the improvement of the indigenous peoples' living standards. Britain and France also discovered that for their empires to be resurrected, an element of political reform based on a new "partnership" of the ruler and the ruled had to be undertaken. They now embarked on colonial government reforms which were carried out at local and regional level. For the French, this was exemplified by the creation of the French Union. For the British was the creation of enlarged Commonwealth. The objectives of these reforms were to strengthen and not weaken the empires. Colonial reforms varied from territory to territory and from region to region. On the one hand Britain and France had different policies for their respective empires, but on the other, both had come unstuck by 1955: the French had lost Vietnam, while the British, despite success in Malaya had become involved in a controversial war against the Mau Mau in Kenya. As the Cold War crept into Asia after 1950, the United States came to bolster the threatened European empires. The French in Indo-China, like the British in Malaya, were believed to be fighting international communism. By the time the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, the Americans were shouldering three-quarters of the costs of France's war effort. Though the Indo-Chinese conflict was temporarily resolved by the Geneva conference in 1954, neither America nor France had influence on the outcome. The Americans were reluctantly pushed by Britain to enter into negotiations with the Russians and Chinese.

As a contrast of the two European colonial powers, the British were generally regarded as more liberal in their approach to colonial reform as compared to the French. The French conception of empire was markedly different from the British. The British always devolved power in their colonies and their motto was when the colonial societies grow up, they would be free. In case of the French they were centralist rather than devolutionists and the empire was referred to as "France overseas." The ultimate goal of assimilation policies was to turn colonial people into good French men and women when they grow up. With France now having been driven out of Southeast Asia in the 1950s, her attention now shifted to her North African dependencies, and it is to this that the next chapter focuses and British reaction to France's dealings with her North African possessions, especially Algeria.

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CHAPTER 3

FRANCE AND ALGERIA 1945 TO NOVEMBER 1954

a. Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, France's possessions in North Africa were Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. These were acquired at different periods in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Algeria (1830), Tunisia (1881) and Morocco (1912) respectively. The degree or intensity of colonisation varied from one country to the other. Tunisia and Morocco were in the exceptional position of Protectorates, in principle independent states, whereas Algeria, at the other extreme was classed as part of France, and therefore not part of the empire or union at all. The traditional rulers, the bey of Tunisia and sultan of Morocco, had by treaty with France surrendered external but not internal sovereignty which was exercised on behalf of the two monarchs by a French Resident. In the case of Algeria the country was divided, like metropolitan France, into communes and départements, but had its own central administration under a governor-general, and its own elected assembly with responsibility for the budget.

The common feature with the three territories was that they had large sections of European settler populations which one way or the other would influence the course of colonial administration throughout the colonial era. For instance, European residents in Tunisia were estimated in 1946 to number 239,000, Morocco had 325,271 in 1951¹ and Algeria had just over one million European settlers by 1954. In Tunisia and Morocco, these settlers were represented by elected bodies in an advisory role. In Algeria, on the other hand, they were French citizens represented by elected deputies in Paris, but also heavily over-represented, in proportion to their numbers, in the Algerian assembly, with legislative powers. The majority Muslim population was heavily underrepresented in this assembly, and until 1946, not represented at all in Paris. Hence, this chapter discusses France's relationship with her North African possessions after 1945 and further assesses the progress or state of the nationalist movements in the region from the post-war period up to the outbreak of the Algerian rebellion in November 1954. France was defeated and humiliated by the Axis forces in North Africa during the Second World War, only to be rescued by the Anglo-American forces in May 1943. The United States then promised France that her sovereignty would be re-established as soon as possible over all territories, Metropolitan as well as colonial, over which the French flag waved in 1939.

b. France and North Africa, 1945 to 1 November 1954

Tunisia

Tunisia which was the most homogeneous of the three Maghrib states was constitutionally the most developed. A constitution, or *destour*, had been granted by the Bey in 1860, and although it had been suspended in 1864, was still nominally in force. Under the treaties of 1881 and 1883 which established the French Protectorate, the Bey

remained sovereign, but the government was in the hands of a Resident Minister. A Consultative Conference representing French settlers in the country was created in 1891, and enlarged during the First World War to include a Tunisian delegation. In 1922 it was converted into a Grand Council to give expression to the idea of Franco-Tunisian co-sovereignty, an idea contrary to the views of Tunisian nationalists. By 1950, France relationship with Tunisia was governed by the so-called co-sovereignty, which simply put, was the sharing of power between the two countries whereas crucial decisions such as those affecting finance and foreign affairs were still the exclusive prerogative of the French Resident General and his officials.

Since before the First World War, Tunisia had had a strong nationalist movement spearheaded by the Neo-Destour Party (formed 1934) by Habib Bourguiba, and was ahead of the other two North African states, Morocco and Algeria. In 1938 Bourguiba was imprisoned in France for his part in the rioting of April of that year. During the Second World War, the Neo-Destour nationalists rallied around the Bey Moncef, until he was deposed in May 1943 and exiled to southern Algeria by the Free French authorities who accused him of collaborating with the Axis powers. In actual fact the deposition had to do with the bey's attempts to be independent of the authority of the Free French leaders. Meanwhile Bourguiba was sent to Rome by the Germans in 1943 who tried to win over his loyalty to the Axis, but he refused. Bourguiba from his prison cell urged the Tunisians to support the Allied cause in the hope that Tunisia would be rewarded with independence at the end of the war. In an appeal to the Tunisians to support France and the Allies he said:

The entire French Nation, once liberated from the Nazi yoke, would not forget ...her true friends, those who stood by her side in the days of trial.²

Between 1943 and 1944 the French colonial administrators tightened their grip on controlling Tunisian affairs. The powers of the Resident General were increased at the expense of the Tunisians who were pushed further into the periphery of government. This dashed any hopes that the Tunisians had towards the French in advancing their nationalist cause. So, Neo-Destour had to adopt new tactics after the war in dealing with the French. Once released from internment, Bourguiba set about to internationalise the Tunisian issue. In March 1945 he secretly left the country and his first stop was Cairo (Egypt) where he sought the support of the newly established Arab League. From Cairo, he lambasted French practices in the Maghrib, comparing them unfavourably with that of the British.³ Bourguiba's globetrotting lasted for two years and by then he had visited the United States, Europe and Asia. In 1946, he pleaded Tunisia's case before the United Nations delegations.

While Bourguiba was still away from home, a major transformation took place on the labour front with the formation of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) in 1946 with Ferhat Hached as the Secretary-General. The UGTT brought its members behind the Neo-Destour nationalist party. Cooperation between the two would be indispensable from then onwards in the struggle against French colonialism. Also during this period France made some conciliatory gestures, such as allowing four Tunisians to serve as ministers and giving them half the seats on the Grand Council (established in

1922). In 1947, the new Resident General in Tunisia, Jean Mons, granted the Tunisians six ministries. Although these were cosmetic reforms and still did not satisfy the nationalist demands, to the colonists the steps were too much and going too far, hence unacceptable. Neo-Destour mobilised every section of Tunisian society and had the Bey as one of its major supporters. The party argued that it wanted independence under a constitutional monarchy. By 1949 the Neo-Destour claimed to have half a million Tunisians among its ranks.

In April 1950, Bourguiba visited Paris carrying a seven-point manifesto of a moderate set of demands. These were; the restitution of Tunisian sovereignty, instead of having ultimate authority vested in the French Resident General; a request for a Tunisian prime minister; suppression of French control of the state administration; removal of local government from the hands of French "civil controllers."⁴ Elected municipal officials, in which French interests would be recognised, would manage government at local level. He also asked for the French police force to yield power to a constituted Tunisian equivalent. Lastly, the election of a National Assembly under universal suffrage representing Tunisians and Europeans in ratio of their true members, would draft a constitution to accommodate Tunisian sovereignty with France's special interests.

Tunisian nationalist hopes were prematurely raised in June 1950 when French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman said that the mission of the new Resident General in Tunisia, Louis Perillier, would be to "conduct Tunisia toward full expansion of its riches and to lead it toward independence, which is the final objective for all the territories at the heart of the French Union."⁵ Bourguiba was said to have been so encouraged by this news that he predicted that France would reap a conquest of hearts more effective than the possession of Tunisian territory. When France revealed its new policy for Tunisia, it was evident that it was way short of Schuman's goal of eventual independence, in actual fact it was to be independence within the French Union.

In August 1950 French reforms went further with the formation of a new government headed by prime minister Mohamed Chenik and other Tunisian nationalists such as Salah ben Youssef (secretary-general of Neo-Destour) as minister of Justice. Subsequent to this, the reform programme was moved some steps further again when in February 1951 a new decree declared that it was no longer a requirement for the Tunisian prime minister's orders to be countersigned by the French secretary-general of the government. This task could now be carried out by the Resident General, so this was a minor change which still maintained French control. The number of Tunisian ministers also became equal to those of their French counterparts in the Grand Council. Tunisians were permitted to work in the administration but holding less significant posts. The French still retained veto powers in the Grand Council and they used this power to delay or even frustrate legislation which the Tunisian ministers considered important.

In April 1951 the Tunisians demanded from the French the establishment of a fully-fledged representative government. This resulted in prime minister Mohammed Chenik, Salah ben Youssef and two other Tunisian ministers going to Paris in October 1951. There, they demanded Tunisian independence and the recognition of total Tunisian

sovereignty, while retaining close cultural, economic, and military relations with France. The French reply came in December with Foreign Minister Robert Schuman insisting on the idea of co-sovereignty, that is, upholding the right of the French to have power in Tunisian politics. This infuriated the Tunisians who embarked on internationalising their plight. Before this could happen they watched with envy when their less-developed eastern neighbour Libya (Italian possession) was granted independence in December 1951 by the United Nations. France was told early in 1952 that an appeal would be made in the United Nations and, a few days later, the Security Council was asked to place the Tunisian question on the agenda. France fought hard to keep the North African problems out of the General Assembly. She vowed to walk out of any debate on these subjects. More importantly, France threatened to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the United Nations (UN).⁶ These threats registered with the United States and the Western European nations (including Britain) who considered the threat of communism of paramount importance than the request of two small Arab states (Tunisia and Morocco) for self-determination or national independence. To further underscore their displeasure with French policy, Neo-Destour organised a major strike in January 1952 and there were violent confrontations between the French and Tunisians. The Tunisian nationalist guerrillas (*fellaghas*) now began to be active in attacking the French. The French authorities responded to all this with more repression and terror which replaced any kind of dialogue between the two communities.

The new Resident General, Jean de Hautecloque decided to throw into disarray and ultimately destroy Tunisian nationalism. On 15 January 1952, Hautecloque demanded that the bey dismiss the Chenik government, an order he refused to carry out. Bourguiba was then arrested with other Neo-Destour leaders. Others such as Salah ben Youssef managed to escape to Cairo. On 25 March 1952, Chenik and three of his ministers were arrested, once again the bey had refused to dismiss the prime minister. So, the situation in Tunisia after 1952 was one of uncompromising stance by the French and the full force of the state machinery was used against the Neo-Destour party. The latter countered this repression by strikes and demonstrations.

French policy in Tunisia continued to vacillate, but once again, in a dramatic turn of events there was a change of government in France. Pierre Mendes-France became prime minister in February 1954 and was willing to listen to and accommodate some of the grievances raised by the Tunisian nationalists. At the same time international circumstances such as the Indo-China conflict prompted the French politicians to move swiftly in resolving the Tunisian question. On 31 July 1954, Mendes-France visited Tunisia. In a speech in Carthage, which became known as the "Declaration of Carthage" he stated that :

*The self-government of the Tunisian State is recognised and proclaimed without reservation by the French Government, whose intention it is both to confirm this principle and to enable Tunisia to carry it successfully into action.*⁷

He further called for continued French influence in Tunisia and a common foreign policy. Mendes-France also requested the bey to choose a new government to negotiate the form of Tunisian independence. Bourguiba, who was still in custody, was allowed to

communicate with the outside world especially his Neo-Destour colleagues and French leaders. Meanwhile, a new government was formed in August 1954 headed by the independent Tahar ben Ammar. Other ministers were Mongi Slim, Mohammed Masmoudi, Hedi Nouira and Sadok Mekkaddem, all members of the Neo-Destour. Despite the Carthage speech France still retained control of substantial areas of administration in Tunisia.

The outbreak of the rebellion in Algeria on 1 November 1954 complicated the French North African situation. The immediate effect of this uprising, which the French had initially underestimated, was that it accelerated French efforts to solve the problem of Tunisia. The negotiations for Tunisian autonomy which soon began between the French and Tunisians were not smooth sailing, they experienced delays, slow progress and some setbacks such as the interruption that resulted from the fall of the Mendes-France regime in February 1955. The administration fell because its North African policy was rejected by a parliamentary vote of 319 to 273.⁸ Edgar Faure was given the task of forming a new government and was thought to have a liberal attitude toward Tunisia. The strongest support for Tunisia and her North African neighbours came out from the Bandung conference in Indonesia in April 1955 when the following statement was issued :

*In view of the unsettled situation in North Africa, and of the persisting denial to the peoples of North Africa of their right to self-determination, the Asian-African Conference declares its support of the rights of the people of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to self-determination and independence, and urges the French government to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue without delay.*⁹

On 22 April 1955 the Faure government and the Tunisian one led by Tahar ben Ammar signed an agreement granting autonomy to Tunisia, transference of judicial powers and Tunisia's customs union with France was confirmed. The conventions embodying this agreement were published on 3 June 1955. The protocol agreement that granted Tunisia independence was signed on 20 March 1956 with Bourguiba leading the Tunisian delegation.

Morocco

The treaty of Fez of 1912 established a protectorate over Morocco which was a traditional Muslim monarchy. In theory the protectorate arrangement preserved the sultan as the ruler of Morocco. Furthermore to the sultan was reserved the right to annul decrees or delay their publication and even withhold his approval of them. As subsequent events would show he could not exercise this power unfettered. In practice the sultan was forced to share his legislative and executive powers with the French Resident General. The latter had the last word in most issues affecting the administration of the protectorate. For instance, the Resident General initiated all royal decrees and nominated all high officials of the protectorate's administration. One such office was that of secretary-general who was directly under the Resident General and was responsible for the economic development of the country.¹⁰ Important departments in this endeavour were finance, agriculture, and public works, all under the secretary-general. From the 1920s onwards, French settlement was encouraged by the Protectorate government, and

led to the occupation of much of the best land in the country by European farmers.

When the Second World War broke out in August 1939, the sultan of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef rallied to the Allied cause and delegated thousands of Moroccan servicemen to fight in the war. This support remained consistent throughout the war despite various attempts to sway the sultan otherwise. Moroccan hopes for liberation were raised on 22 January 1943, when at a meeting in Casablanca between President Roosevelt and Sultan Mohammed V, the former expressed some sympathy for Moroccan independence. This the Moroccans viewed as in line with the aspirations of the Atlantic Charter. The major transformation in Moroccan nationalism took place in December 1943, when the Moroccan National Party was transmuted into the Istiqlal (Independence) Party by the Moroccan nationalist Ahmed Belafrej. The religio-nationalist Allal el-Fassi became president of the party and Belafrej settled for the secretary-general position. From its inception the Istiqlal Party established a cordial relationship with the sultan. In January 1944 the Istiqlal Party issued a manifesto demanding independence and territorial unification of Morocco. The party claimed that the people's right of self-determination was denied by the French contrary to allied statements and the Atlantic Charter.

In April 1947, sultan Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef visited Tangier and delivered a speech which turned out to be a turning point in the nationalist cause. The sultan spoke of the "legitimate rights of the Moroccan people," and called for the strengthening of Moroccan ties with the Arab League,¹¹ and its world to the eastern Mediterranean. As a way of defiance the sultan deliberately omitted or deleted from his prepared speech by the Resident General a complimentary passage about the French protectorate in Morocco. He also called for a greater participation of Morocco in government by proposing that the budget should be scrutinised by a special Moroccan commission before he would approve it. The Tangier speech galvanised the Istiqlal membership and it embarked upon a massive recruitment drive. This close relationship between the Istiqlal (Independence) Party and the sultan greatly worried the French, and they decided that the relationship had to be nipped in the bud, moreso that the sultan was becoming more and more popular with the vast majority of his people.

The French decided to appoint a new Resident General who could deal with the Moroccan situation firmly. This task was assigned to the decorated army officer, General (later Marshal) Aphonse Juin. His appointment began in May 1947. Juin's approach to the Moroccan situation was a double-edged one, that is, being firm and at the same time making some concessions to the Moroccans such as increasing their participation in government. By trying to kill two birds with one stone, he dismally failed on both accounts. In the Council of Government which he created to discuss matters of government policy and to debate the budget, the settler lobby in Morocco which was the backbone of his support proved his own undoing as they refused to pass the economic programme that he proposed. On the other hand, the sultan resisted Juin's orders which he perceived as infringements upon his authority. For example, the sultan refused to sign a number of decrees of the Residency and also declined to sanction a change in local government procedure which if implemented, would have granted the French inhabitants

as many representatives as the Muslims, despite the fact that the former were highly outnumbered in terms of population ratio.

Juin's failures precipitated what came to be known as the "crisis of 1951"¹² The crisis began in December 1950 when Moroccan members of the Council of Government criticized the budget for the coming year by arguing that it only catered for the colons interests.¹³ The representative leading the attack was Mohammed Laghzaoui, President of the Federation of Moroccan Chambers of Commerce. Juin intervened by ordering Laghzaoui to leave the Chamber. Other members of the Istiqlal expressing solidarity walked out. They immediately went to see the sultan who received them warmly. This cohabitation between the Istiqlal and the Sultan further increased the French worries about the two. They decided on steps that would undermine the sultan in the eyes of his people, the ultimate objective being to wean him from the nationalist cause. This they did through the "divide and rule" tactics. General Juin turned to the sultan's opponents to destabilise his rule. The most prominent of these was Thami al-Ghawi, the Pasha of Marrakesh, under whom most Berbers lived, and Sherif Abdelhay Kettani, leader of the Kittaniya brotherhood. A sustained attack was launched mainly directed at the Sultan, al-Glawi accused Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef of being, not sultan of Morocco, but the sultan of the Istiqlal. With the Resident General's encouragement al-Glawi began to tour Berber villages and asked other Muslim leaders to support him against the sultan. Soon afterwards, petitions against the Sultan and Istiqlal were circulated by Berber tribal leaders. This disobedience, the colonial authorities encouraged and claimed that it showed the peoples' discontentment with the sultan's rule and partisan politics.

The Resident General and the Berber tribal leaders began to sponsor the candidacy of Sidi Mohammed's uncle, the sexagenarian Moulay Mohammed ben Arafa to be enthroned as the sultan of Morocco. All these French manoeuvres reached a peak in August 1953. In the meantime, Juin had been replaced by General Guillaume as Resident General and he pursued his predecessor's policy. Guillaume ordered the sultan to sign all pending decrees; when he refused, on 20 August 1953 he deposed the sultan claiming that he had lost the confidence, trust and was even unpopular among his own people. The sultan was first exiled to Corsica, then to Madagascar. In his place was installed Moulay Mohammed ben Arafa.

The deposition of Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef soon turned him into a martyr. The Moroccans engaged in different forms of resistance and defiance and called for the return of the sultan. Ben Arafa's authority was disregarded, terrorist attacks increased, and these were directed at Moroccans who were thought to be police agents or informers. The *imams* who said the Friday prayer in the name of ben Arafa were also attacked as this was viewed as betrayal of the legitimate sultan.¹⁴ The period beginning with the deposition of the sultan and the subsequent two years witnessed a number of clashes between the nationalists and the French. A boycott of French goods began in early 1954. French property in the form of harvested grain stores, and automobiles mysteriously caught fire and there were instances of trains derailment.¹⁵ Terrorist activities continued until mid-1955 when a new Resident General Gilbert Grandval was appointed and one of his instructions was to return Morocco into the concept of the protectorate and to prevent

direct administration by the local French authorities in Morocco which bypassed Paris.

In August 1955, Franco-Moroccan talks opened in Aix-les-Bains. These talks were significant because every voice of Moroccan public opinion was represented, from the Istiqlal, Berbers to the Pashas. One of the issues discussed at these talks was the abdication of ben Arafa and the return of the dethroned sultan. In spite of these talks, France was still not contemplating full independence for Morocco outside the French Union. This was illustrated by Mendes-France statement in the same month when he said that he did not see a Tunisian type solution for Morocco. On 20 August 1955, the occasion of the second anniversary of the deposition of sultan Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef there were widespread revolts in Morocco which were highlighted by the massacre at Oued Zem. Here the Berbers who descended from the Middle Atlas Mountains attacked everyone they encountered. The result was the murder of fifty Frenchmen¹⁶ and this incident was also a signal to the French that they could no longer rely on the Pasha of Marrakesh al-Glawi, in controlling the Berber tribesmen.

After intense debate, the Moroccan denouement was brought to a close when Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef returned home via France on 16 November 1955 and assumed the throne as King Mohammed V. Mohammed V signed the accords with France which resulted in complete independence for Morocco on 2 March 1956. He promised protection to expatriate French citizens and agreed to offers of economic cooperation and aid from Paris.

Algeria

On the eve of the uprising the situation in Algeria was that of two societies that were unequal in economic, political and social terms. The majority of the Algerian population numbered eight million Muslims of Arab and Berber stock. The minority were Europeans, of French, Italian and Spanish origin, who were estimated to number one million; apart from South Africa, this was the highest area of white settlement in Africa. The Europeans settled in the country from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, henceforth had come to regard Algeria as their home. Since the colonisation of Algeria in the nineteenth century, several attempts at reform had been made by the French in order to integrate Algeria into France's daily political and economic life. Constitutionally since 1881, Algeria was part of France, and in principle was governed in the same way at national and local level. In 1947 all inhabitants of Algeria were classed as French citizens, but in practice the Muslim community continued to be underrepresented in both local and national government. Muslim political leaders had campaigned since before the First World War for the equal rights denied them by the European community. Since before the Second World War, however, this demand had been steadily overtaken by a demand for independence, but since Algeria was constitutionally part of France this demand had been consistently rejected while further progress toward equal rights had been blocked since the passing of the citizenship law in 1947.

On the economic front, despite notable contributions by the French to the development of public works, public health, industry and agriculture the majority (Muslims) still fared badly. For example, the French settlers had the rich, well kept and productive farms and the Muslims had small, crudely tilled fields and the art of husbandry fell far behind that of the European farmers. In the towns, most of the rich were French and most of the poor were not. As French citizens, since the war, Algerians had the right to go and work in France, and about 300,000 of them were doing so by 1954.¹⁷ Through the remittance these Algerian migrants sent back home, most villages were able to live. These Algerian workers in France provided a valuable source of cheap though usually unskilled labour for French industry. However, gradually these workers began to be a real problem as many lived in slums or shared cheap hotel rooms or even slept in shifts.¹⁸ So discontent and poverty drove all too many to crime. The ramifications of all this were widespread resentment, disaffection and a feeling of being treated as second-rate French citizens. Thus, by 1954 the way was open for militant extremism.

During the Second World War, Algeria was under the rule of the Vichy government from 1940 to the end of 1942, when it was liberated by the Anglo-American landings in Morocco in November 1942. Nationalism which had hibernated during the war began to rear its head after the liberation. This was illustrated by the issuing of the Manifesto of the Algerian People in February 1943 by Ferhat Abbas. The Manifesto called for the full participation of Algerians in government, as well as the establishment of a fully democratic constitution for the country. So, in other terms, it could be argued that just before and during the Second World War, Algerian nationalism as personified by the assimilationists under Ferhat Abbas, the reformist ulama of Abdelhamid Ben Badis and radical anticolonial nationalists under Messali Hadj was still at a nascent stage.

The most radical transformation in the Algerian resistance to the French took place in May 1945. May 8, 1945 was the V-E Day for Europe as Germany had capitulated in the war. For the European Algerians it was a day of celebration and demonstrations were organised throughout the country. Sétif which was in the Constantine region was mainly inhabited by Muslims and the town had in the past been a hotbed of revolutionary activity. The Sétif Muslims had been granted permission by the French Algerian authorities to demonstrate as part of the victory celebrations and they were ordered to carry placards which were unprovocative. The demonstration began peacefully although most of the participants appear to have been supporters of Messali Hadj. Within a short time that the march had begun, a section of the demonstrators turned it into a nationalist one. Alongside Allied flags people raised banners and placards which read as follows, "down with colonialism and long live a free Algeria."¹⁹ For the first time the Green-and-Blue banners of the legendary Abdelkader's shortlived nineteenth century state was displayed by the marchers.²⁰ Scuffles broke out when the police tried to seize the banners.

On that day and the following three days Muslims attacked Europeans and killed about a hundred of them. European women were cruelly raped and some brutally killed as their breasts were even slashed off. The violence spread from the town into the country, as

happened in Kenya at the height of the Mau Mau rebellion, European farmers found themselves being attacked by some of their long-serving and loyal servants. French reprisals were ruthless, as thousands of Muslims were wantonly massacred. The exact figure of the Muslims killed has since become a debatable and controversial issue. Figures varied wildly depending on who told the story. The subsequent Tubert Commission Report put the figure at between 1,020 and 1,300, Arab nationalists from Mashriq to Maghreb put the death toll at forty-five thousand.²¹ Ali Mazrui and Michael Tidy estimated the figure of Muslim casualties to be around twenty thousand.²² Other sources put the death toll at six thousand. Whatever the exact figure, the number of Muslims murdered by the French far outstripped that of the Europeans killed. Even the precise cause(s) of why the Sétif march turned violent could not be ascertained, but there appears to have been both social and political grievances at play. The fallout from this was that, before the end of the year 5, 560 Muslims had been arrested, ninety-nine of whom were condemned to death and several hundred to life imprisonment.²³ Among the prominent Algerian nationalists arrested were Ferhat Abbas and Messali Hadj. Sétif was the first insurrection in which the rank and file of the countryside joined together with the nationalist movement which had been created by the urban Algerians and had been spreading rapidly to different parts of the country.

The legacy of the Sétif uprising was that the relationship between the coloniser and colonised was no longer the same again. The incident was to gradually swing the political pendulum to those within the Muslim society who wanted open military confrontation with the French. Time was running out for the dovish sections of the Muslim community who still believed in non-violent methods to achieve equality with the French. Writing later during the course of the Algerian war and commenting on Sétif, Edward Behr states that it was :

*an event which, in one form or another, has marked every single Algerian Moslem alive at the time ... and the after-effects of the Sétif uprising cannot be underestimated. Every one of the "new wave" of Algerian nationalists prominent in the National Liberation Front today traces his revolutionary determination back to May 1945. The moderate, French-educated Algerians who had hoped for progressive evolution towards self-government had their hopes dashed by French violence. Among the current leaders of the FLNthere is general agreement : each of them felt after May 1945 that some form of armed uprising would sooner or later become necessary.*²⁴

After the Sétif uprising there was to be nominal peace for close to a decade before the Algerian war of independence officially broke out. Alistair Horne correctly states that "in effect, the shots fired at Sétif represented the first volley of the Algerian War."²⁵

After May 1945, the French authorities introduced some reforms which were geared at bringing the Algerians within the political system. For this purpose three successive assemblies were created. The August 1945 decree granted the Muslim electorate, the so-called "second college." In the first assembly Muslims were offered to elect the same number of representatives as the colons for the first Constituent Assembly. In the elections held in October 1945, thirteen Muslim members, mostly government

collaborators and assimilationists were elected. These were also elected by a low turnout as Ferhat Abbas and Messali Hadj who were still under arrest had urged their supporters not to participate in this electoral process. Once freed, in March 1946 Ferhat Abbas created a new party the Democratic Union of Algeria Manifesto (UDMA). The party envisaged or proposed the Republic of Algeria which was to be an autonomous entity but within the framework of the French Union or French "Commonwealth" created in 1946 as a replacement of the old French Empire.²⁶ This Algerian Republic was to be fully independent internally while leaving the French Union to take care of foreign affairs and defence. The French of Algeria were to be recognised as Algerian citizens, in reciprocation, every Algerian citizen would enjoy citizenship in France. The Republic was to have its own parliament, directly elected by universal suffrage, and would have control over the budget and also enjoy legislative power.

Taking into consideration the political milieu of the time UDMA blueprint was a non-starter since Paris policy was rebuilding and consolidating the empire in the post-war era and colonies were not to be freed, moreover for Algeria it was not considered a colony but part of France. The second Constituent Assembly was elected in June 1946. Its major decision was the passing of the decision which increased the number of Muslims entitled to vote with the Europeans in the first electoral college by the law of 5 October 1946. It dissolved before it could discuss the organic law of Algeria, it was left to the new parliament which came into being as a result of the October 1946 referendum. Meanwhile, Messali Hadj formed a new pro-nationalist party called Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms (MTLD).

Debate began in early 1947 for the organic law of Algeria. During the discussions that spanned from March to September 1947, the majority of Algerian deputies argued for an autonomous Algerian Republic federated with Tunisia and Morocco within the framework of the French Union. Finally, on 20 September 1947, the French National Assembly passed the so-called Organic Statute of Algeria of 1947. Under this organic law, Algeria was defined as a group of overseas departments. It was to be headed by a Governor General appointed by the French government and wielded executive power with the advice of a council of six. The Statute declared all inhabitants of Algeria citizens of France without discrimination as to origin, race, language, or religion.²⁷ The 1947 Statute of Algeria perpetuated the principle of separate electoral colleges. The first college was elected by some 464,000 Europeans, men and women plus 58,000 elite Muslims who held French civil status, while the second college was elected by 1,300,000 ordinary Muslims.²⁸ The Algerian Assembly was to have 120 members, from each electoral college. This clearly shows that the system was an unfair one as it favoured the Europeans who were few in number. Though Muslim women were still denied many rights, the Statute did extend suffrage rights to them, but only used it in 1958.

The powers of the Algerian Assembly were limited as they excluded defence, elections, local government, administrative and judicial organisation, civil and criminal codes, determination of felonies and misdemeanours, land policy and customs.²⁹ All these were the responsibility of the National Assembly in Paris. Budgets needed the approval of the Governor General and had to be co-signed by ministers of Interior and Finance in Paris.

Each of Algeria's two colleges sent fifteen representatives to the French National Assembly. These thirty men, plus fourteen Senators in the Council of the Republic and eighteen Counsellors in the Assembly of the French Union, completed Algeria's representation to Paris. Election of Senators and Counsellors was indirect, while the thirty representatives were elected through direct universal manhood suffrage.³⁰ The Statute of Algeria of 1947 failed in practice because it met stiff opposition from the colons lobby and colonial administrators in Algeria, both who considered it a disgrace and the Muslims considered it an insult.

The Muslims expressed their displeasure towards the Statute in the municipal elections of October 1947 when they voted in huge numbers for the nationalist MTLN of Messali Hadj. Astounded by MTLN's electoral victories, Paris decided to replace the then Governor General Yves Chataigneau who was considered too weak to deal with the Algerian situation. His replacement was the socialist hard-liner Marcel-Edmond Naegelen who was determined to curb Muslim nationalism. This he did through tampering with the electoral process. In the run-up to the April 1948 elections of the Algerian Assembly, Naegelen's administration employed methods or tactics which could ensure that the MTLN was disadvantaged or fared badly. On the eve of the elections a substantial number of MTLN candidates had been arrested, voter intimidation was carried out through the deployment of the armed forces everywhere. Ballot boxes were either stuffed or disappeared mysteriously.

When the day of voting came, it proved to be a huge electoral fraud. Out of the sixty seats allocated to the Muslims in the second electoral college, two-thirds of these were won by the administration's sponsored candidates, the MTLN got nine and UDMA got eight.³¹ In case of the MTLN four of the victorious candidates were prevented from taking their seats as criminal charges were laid against them. Subsequent elections were subjected to massive rigging and this further sent a signal to the nationalists that change could not be brought about by participating in the constitutional process.³² The MTLN and UDMA now began to be moribund.

As alluded to earlier, after 1945 some Algerian activists still favoured assimilation or a peaceful negotiated solution to the question of Algeria's relationship with France, but others thought this was the wrong way to proceed and advocated a more militant and aggressive approach. This latter group had in 1947 coalesced into what was called Secret Organisation (OS). They comprised of a group of young nationalists mostly in their twenties, namely, Ahmed Ben Bella (later President), Ait Ahmed Hocine, Mohamed Boudiaf, M'Hammed Yazid, Mohamed Khider, Belkacem Krim, Ben M'hidi and Lakdar Ben Tobbal.³³ They began to work underground toward armed rebellion. A wave of arrests by the French security service in 1950 scattered them as some were imprisoned, some sought refuge in the Kabylia or Aures mountains in Algeria, the rest fled to either France itself or Egypt. Once some of them had escaped from prison in 1952, namely, Ben Bella and Ait Ahmed Hocine, the OS started to regroup and met undetected frequently in Switzerland where most of the discussions and planning was done. In March 1954 the OS reconstituted themselves in what was called the Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action (CRUA).

These young revolutionaries were from different parts of Algeria, and had different social, political and military backgrounds. Generally, they were representative of the entire Muslim Algerian society. They had in September 1954 divided the country into six *wilayas* (military zones or districts). Each *wilaya* had a leader given the military rank of colonel. The colonel in each *wilaya* was assisted by three officers, one each for political affairs, logistics and liaison and information.³⁴ The *wilaya* system was later to be developed into a number of subdivisions. The subsidiary units were called *mantaqas* (zones), which in turn contained *nahayas* (regions), *qasmas* (sectors), and *duwwar* (circles) in descending order.³⁵ This military system was intended for effective execution of any future course of action. In their clandestine activities, Cairo proved a safe haven for most of these Algerian political activists. Early in October 1954, Mohamed Boudiaf secretly met *wilaya* leaders in Algeria and informed them that the rebellion would start on 1 November 1954. In the night of 31 October 1954, a series of attacks took place in the Aures mountains and Kabylie region. The Algerian war of independence had almost begun.

c. Britain and Algeria, 1945 to November 1954

Les Anglo-saxons was the term used after 1945 for the British and Americans and it expressed French fears that the two were colluding at the destruction of the French empire and the status of France as a great power.³⁶ This suspicion or mistrust was to form the basis for French attitudes towards Britain up to the outbreak of the Algerian conflict in November 1954, despite repeated British diplomatic gesture and assurances at international forums such as the United Nations. The French resented what they perceived as condescending superiority on the part of the British. Responding to the Sétif uprising, Martin Thomas has stated that the then British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden after being presented with and reading conflicting estimates of the Sétif death toll, simply appended, "What is this all about?" And that was the end of the matter.³⁷ What Eden's retort indicates is that Algeria was not of great significance or importance to Whitehall at the time. In other words, it was a peripheral issue.

On 14 July 1946, in commemoration of Bastille Day, the then British Ambassador in Paris, after commending France on the second Constituent Assembly of that year, and the proposal to enfranchise the Muslim majority as part of France's "new deal" for the Empire/Union sent a message to the French Government stating that:

*We are on your side in Algeria. We ardently desire the success of your efforts in Algeria.*³⁸

In February 1947, the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin issued a circular to all consuls in North Africa regarding Anglo-French relations in that sphere of the world. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a circular along the same lines in June 1947. The principal theme of both communications in 1947 was the importance of close cooperation in all fields between the two countries, as a cardinal element in their foreign policy.³⁹ British Consuls in North Africa were instructed that it was directly contrary to His Majesty's government policy for British officials to do anything to weaken the French position in North Africa. It was further stated that while it was naturally the duty

of these officers to keep the Foreign Office informed of developments in their districts, they had no intention whatever of concerning themselves with, and still less encouraging the local nationalist movements.⁴⁰ The British further emphasised that any suggestion that they were working against the interests of France was therefore patently absurd. Despite these British assurances the French still had suspicions and misgivings about British policy towards them in North Africa and other parts of the world.

In 1949 the French Secretary of State Paul Devinat wrote a long article that was published by the *Manchester Guardian* in which he complained of the severe judgement by the British press and government of France's political weaknesses, her social disturbances and financial difficulties.⁴¹ The French also complained that Britain, backed by the United States of America, was acting as though she and not France should play the leading part in Western European Affairs. Instances that were quoted by the French were the general tendency of United States representatives to gang up with the British over German questions, and the decision to grant additional aid to Great Britain contrary to the known views of France.⁴² France threatened that if the United States continued to pursue the policy of thinking that it was Britain which was to play the leading part in Western European affairs, not France, then France would have to reconsider her whole position and go her own way.⁴³ Implicit in this French diplomatic threat was the possibility of striking a deal with the Soviet Union.

French rumblings of discontent with British policy towards them extended to colonial affairs, and were to be continued throughout the 1950s up to the outbreak of the Algerian war of independence. For instance in late 1951 the French expressed their disquiet at British policy in North Africa and Levant and argued that British policy was inimical to their interests. One example stated for this was British support for the Arab League and all that went with it. Other examples cited were British support for the United Nations' creation of a Libyan state without taking account of its effects on French policy in North Africa; the supposed British support for El Fassi's nationalist cause in Morocco; and the visit of Bourguiba to London in 1951, especially his broadcast on BBC.⁴⁴ In fact, Libyan independence was championed by British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, as this not only corresponded to the perceived wishes of the inhabitants but met British political and strategic requirements.⁴⁵

The British response to these charges were that while some, such as the Bourguiba affair were genuine complaints, the truth of the matter was that London and Paris had directly contrary theories of colonial development, hence there was bound to be friction between them in West and North Africa. In a letter dated 31 October 1951 from London to Dakar, the Foreign Office claimed that the French were frustrated by the fact that they (the British) were rightly or wrongly attempting to come to terms with nationalism in Africa which the French did not believe to be possible or desirable.⁴⁶ However, the letter added that the French concerns were admissible to a certain extent especially in so far as there was the need to preserve a united front towards anti-colonial elements.

Early in 1954, after being appointed British Ambassador to France, Gladwyn Jebb summarised the uneasiness in Anglo-French relations at the time as follows :

*Ever since Robert Schuman's startling and unheralded initiation in 1950 there had been a vague feeling in Whitehall that the French were not "playing the game"; that they were inclined to take an individual and at the same time rather unpredictable line ; and that in any case, owing to constant changes of government the Fourth Republic was a weak sister who must be kept on the straight and narrow path of Western solidarity by a firm, purposeful and self-confident Britain.*⁴⁷

The above statement was made against the background of the May 1950 French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman proposal for the creation of a supranational authority to control Europe's coal and steel industries. This proposal came to be known as the "Schuman Plan"⁴⁸ and it finally led to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) on 1 January 1958. But the above quotation serves to explain the state of affairs prevailing with regards to Anglo-French relations by the outbreak of the Algerian war in Africa as elsewhere. British-French colonial relations did not go hand in hand on a number of issues, and that it was the French who complained. But it is also quite clear from the above that British dealings or discussion of Algeria was always subsumed in the wider question of French colonial policy in North Africa and Africa generally. In other words, Algeria was not treated distinctively by Britain before the outbreak of the war.

d. Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown that the three French possessions in North Africa were treated differently depending on their constitutional position. Since Tunisia and Morocco were regarded as protectorates, their political symbols or institutions were not destroyed by colonisation. So, after the Second World War, the Constitution of 1860 in Tunisia and the Sultan in Morocco came to symbolise autonomy and national unity. The budding nationalist movements in the two protectorates were built around these two principles of national self-government. International circumstances such as the fallout from the Indo-China war speeded France's withdrawal from them, though the final push was given by the outbreak of the war in Algeria.

Algeria was in the unique position of being a colony and moreover classified as a part of France. This meant that its value to France was immense. So, after the Second World War constitutional reforms that were undertaken by the French were intended to ameliorate the grievances of some sections of the Muslim society such as the French educated and assimilationists. Even if these political reforms were done in good faith, they had to be always balanced with the needs of the large settler population which not only blocked these reforms but was willing to fight any attempts which tended to create some parity between them and the Muslims. By 1954 some of the Algerian Muslims had lost any faith or confidence on political reform, and were convinced that other means outside the political framework could liberate them from the colonial ordeal.

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CHAPTER 4

ALGERIAN WAR, NOVEMBER 1954 TO SUEZ, 1956

a. Outbreak and Escalation of War, 1 November 1954 to September 1956

The history of the war in these years is given for British government purposes in the Consular Reports for 1955 to 1956.¹ The Algerian war of independence broke out on 1 November 1954, All Saint's Day, in the Aures mountains east of Algeria. It was a series of terrorist attacks on specifically chosen targets. What amazed many observers and commentators of the Algerian scene at the time was the meticulous way in which these attacks were orchestrated and carried out. The "terrorists" struck simultaneously at night in many widely separated places. No doubt this left the impression that the whole operation had been carefully planned. The attacks took many forms, from the commando-type raids on police and military posts and outlying farms to the murder of isolated French soldiers and civilians and even some Algerians. In many cases the raids followed the same pattern. The terrorists began by setting fire to buildings, and then opened up with light automatic weapons and rifles against their chosen target. In all there were over sixty terrorist attacks carried out throughout the country that night.² In Cairo the leaders of the CRUA announced the founding of the (FLN)-National Liberation Front, with a military wing called the National Liberation Army (ALN). The FLN then issued a proclamation calling on all Algerians "to rise and fight for their freedom."³

At the beginning, the French government was dismissive of the uprising as the work of a tiny minority and hotheads bent on violence and sponsored from outside. Militarily, French response was swift and prompt with several parachute troops, mobile guards and armed security police dispatched to Algeria within a matter of hours. Politically, the then French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France assured France, Algeria and the world at large that normality, peace and tranquillity would soon be restored in Algeria. The Premier's Interior Minister, Francois Mitterrand, went so far as to tell the world and the "rebels" that France's only negotiation would be war. He further stated that the Republic, guarantee of France's future, would be defended by all possible means.⁴ But the tide of events soon proved how wrong they were.

Once the war had broken out in this way, Muslims were arrested and often tortured by the police, brought before the courts which were both biased and permeated with a spirit of racialism, and finally after being sentenced, passed into the hands of a prison service which itself was subordinate to the police. The whole process took place within a closed circuit of which torture formed an integral part. Using out-of-date lists of suspects the police systematically arrested members of the Algerian nationalist organisation, the MLTD. This movement was itself in a state of turmoil at the time and so had nothing to do with the rebellion. Yet a good number of those arrested were subjected to the vilest and most despicable tortures.

Surprisingly the facts were very soon known in France. According to Pierre Vidal-

Naquet, as early as 15 January 1955 *L'Express*, a weekly review generally known to have close connexions with Pierre Mendes-France, then Prime Minister, published an article by Francois Mauriac entitled (prophetically) "La Question" ("Torture").⁵ More revelations were soon leaked out of men being subjected to the most inhumane forms of treatment, with prisoners being dragged from police quarters to the law courts while still bleeding from their wounds, others with open and barely healed wounds.⁶ Such excesses were brought to the notice of the National Assembly during a debate on the Algerian problem between 2-5 February 1955. The official French reaction to these charges were summed up by the Interior Minister, Francois Mitterrand and the Prime Minister, Mendes-France as follows. The former was evasive in his response. While he admitted that certain excesses had taken place, he insisted on paying tribute to the Algerian police work. Mendes-France was, far more definite: He began by paying tribute to Francois Mauriac's sterling work and went on to speak of horrible excesses which had at times been committed. Though they might have been exaggerated in certain instances, he admitted their occurrence and insisted that they must be stopped everywhere and at once.⁷ But on 5 February the Mendes-France government fell over its Algerian policy of *entente* and reforms. The way was open to repression.

1955, had opened with the Algerian question being first raised in the United Nations Security Council in January. The issue was raised by the Saudi Arabian delegation who drew the Council's attention to the situation in Algeria, which it felt might endanger the maintenance of internal peace and security.⁸ Saudi Arabia did not request a meeting of the Council on the question but did reserve its right to call for one. By a vote of eight to five, the Assembly's General Committee agreed to include Algeria on the agenda of the tenth General Assembly session coming in September. In April 1955 the FLN achieved their first international diplomatic coup as they were invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the third world non-aligned movement, that is, the Bandung Conference in Indonesia. The conference condemned colonialism in all its shapes and unanimously adopted an Egyptian sponsored motion proclaiming Algeria's right to independence and called on France to implement this immediately.⁹

The development and growth of nationalist agitation and violence in Algeria was always linked to events in her French protectorate neighbours of Morocco and Tunisia. The demands of the nationalist movement in Morocco as stated earlier, had on 20 August 1953 led to the deposition of the Sultan, Sidi Mohammed Ben Youssef. The dethronement of the Sultan now became a rallying point for Moroccan nationalists. On the second anniversary of the Moroccan King's deposition riots broke out in many Moroccan cities. These coincided with riots in Algeria, which appear to have been carefully pre-planned. The violence that ensued culminated in what came to be known as the Philippeville Massacres. The attacks were the result of a plan of indiscriminate killing of Europeans hatched by Youssef Zighout, commander of *wilaya* two and his deputy, Lakhdar Ben Tobbal.¹⁰ With this plan they hoped to provoke a massive popular uprising carrying the war to the urban areas where most Europeans lived. The principal targets were the harbour city of Philippeville, its surrounding neighbourhood El-Milia, and the area around Constantine proper. On that day of 20 August 1955 government officials, Muslim collaborators and Europeans of all kinds were attacked with grenades,

knives, guns, sticks and sickles. Their cars were damaged, telegraph lines were vandalised and the emergency radio transmitter rendered unworkable. One of the victims killed in these random rebel attacks was the nephew of Ferhat Abbas, one of the Algerian nationalist leaders.¹¹

French reprisals were severe and received widespread press coverage abroad. There were reports of atrocities committed by the French army in Algeria. Whole settlements were destroyed and men, women, and children were massacred. According to Martin Thomas the West German press was particularly critical of French actions, condemning "scorched earth" methods and a "bloodbath" in which some 1,000 Algerians were allegedly killed during the destruction of nine Arab villages around Oued-Zenati in Constantine.¹² Whereas the French authorities were quick to blame "foreign influence" mainly Islamic countries for helping the rebels, accusations were also levelled at the Americans though no concrete evidence was provided against them. The unsubstantiated charge against the Americans was that they wanted France to be driven out of Algeria so that they (US) could have a free hand in Algeria and exploit Algerian oil.¹³ For the Algerian nationalists Philippeville did achieve its intended purpose. The two societies were driven further apart, and all-out repression moved a step nearer.

It came in 1956, which opened with the intensification of the fighting between the FLN and the French Army. Whereas at the beginning of the rebellion France seemed inclined to a political solution of the Algerian problem, as was shown by the appointment of the liberal Jacques Soustelle as Governor of Algeria, all was to be abandoned in 1956. In 1956 France now became more and more determined to deal with the problem in a military sense. In February 1956 the French Prime Minister Guy Mollet warned the United States that if France was driven out of North Africa, the whole of French Black Africa would fall under the Soviet Union's influence, thus playing the Cold War card to cling to France's North African possession. Mollet, having been met on his visit to Algiers in March by an angry European population opposed to his choice of Georges Catroux as Governor of Algeria, went still further when he made a U-turn on Algerian policy by appointing the hard line Robert Lacoste to the more senior position of Resident Minister of Algeria (this replaced the post of Governor). Since the new office had discretionary powers, Lacoste gave priority to the military solution instead of the political one. This was carried out through the policy of *quadrillage*, in which the army divided Algeria into military districts or zones which it occupied especially along the Tunisia border where it had barriers built. It is also important to note that the French Army had immensely increased in Algeria from 80,000 in 1954 to 400,000 in 1956.¹⁴ So under Lacoste the Army effectively took over the government of Algeria.

Since the war waged by the FLN was, by its very nature revolutionary, the main object of the insurrection was to bring about a state of affairs in which every Algerian in every town or village, should be convinced that the cause of the FLN was his own. Brutal and coercive methods were, if necessary, used to achieve this. Those who collaborated with the French Army were executed and those who were disobedient were severely punished. By the second half of 1956 this object had almost been achieved. The old parties and the rival movement of Messali Hadj had been, to all intents and purposes, eliminated. The

ALN, with its military units scouring the countryside and its terrorist networks, was only one, although best-known, of the means employed in this revolutionary war. Contact with the population and in particular with the peasant population was maintained through the Political and Administrative Organisation (OPA) which knit together the revolutionary leaders in each village, each settlement, and each town.¹⁵

In the meantime, the FLN had grown in terms of membership, with different classes of people with varying interests and opinions joining its ranks. It was now becoming unwieldy and cumbersome to manage an organisation of such magnitude without proper political structures. Though a significant number of the movement's leadership who started the war were either killed in action or had gone into exile, others who remained, such as Ramdane Abane who had made his mark in the movement as an outstanding political intellect, realised the urgent need to come together to iron out differences within the movement, by providing structures for political direction and leadership. The outcome was the Soummam Valley Congress in Kabylia that opened on 20 August 1956, a date which made it impossible for the external leadership to attend. After many days of debate, the gathering produced a forty-page document, which clarified the objectives of the revolution and formalised the military structures. It reaffirmed the goal of complete independence, nor was there to be a cease-fire before recognition of independence for Algerian territory in totality. The National Liberation Army (ALN) was provided with a single general staff under Belkacem Krim. For political matters, a National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA) was elected with a membership of thirty-four and within the CNRA there was also a five member Committee for Coordination and Execution (CCE).¹⁶

In order to prevent the emergence of "personality cults" it was agreed that collective leadership should be the motto. The aim of the struggle was stated as a single democratic and socialist Algerian Republic. The congress also affirmed the authority of the political leadership over the military. Furthermore it affirmed the primacy of the internal leadership over the external. These were major decisions taken at Soummam, but as with all revolutionary movements a split was created between those who were in exile and those who carried on the difficult struggle at home. Parallels, though these have not been much noticed, could be seen with the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, that is, the exiles versus the internals. The former suffered a major blow when on 22 October 1956 the French hijacked a Moroccan plane bound for Tunis and carrying four of the external leadership of the FLN namely Ahmed Ben Bella, Bou Diaf, Ait Ahmed, and Mohamed Khider.¹⁷ The fifth person arrested was the Algerian academic Mostefa Lacheraf who worked for the FLN. These were then incarcerated in France up to the end of the war. This was a major coup for the French, although it alienated the newly-independent states of Morocco and Tunisia. But the incident was rapidly overtaken by the Suez crisis.

b. Britain and Algeria , November 1954 to September 1956

After the years following Bevin's circular of 1947, when Britain had indeed been largely content to leave Algeria to the French, the outbreak of the war not only brought Algeria

to the critical attention of the British public, but obliged Her Majesty's Government to consider the implications of the position adopted in 1947 in this new situation. In practice, British policy makers never formulated a coherent systematic and detailed policy on the Algerian war or the whole North African question. Throughout the Algerian war, British policy towards France and the Algerian rebellion was reactive rather than proactive. Within Whitehall at times, policy makers, African and Middle East experts were critical of France's conduct during the war but these criticisms were never made public, possibly for diplomatic reasons. From its start, up to its conclusion, however, the Algerian problem was often raised in the House of Commons by the Opposition Labour Party Members, notably Anthony Wedgwood Benn and Fenner Brockway leading the way. As subsequent examples will show, on many occasions Government responses were often couched in diplomatic and legalistic mumbo-jumbo language, which often raised more questions than answers and added further ambiguity on British policy or stance. In Fleet Street circles opinions were divided on the Algerian issue; left-wing papers were often critical of the French demeanour in Algeria whereas right-wing papers usually supported France on the ground that she was protecting wider NATO and Western interests in Algeria. The following discussion of this chapter details how these three broad sources of the British establishment reacted to and commented on the outbreak and development of the Algerian rebellion, and how these commentaries related to the broader British colonial and decolonisation policies in Africa.

Commenting early in 1955 on the fall of the Mendes-France regime, *The Listener* stated that North Africa raised for any Frenchman a tremendous political and moral problem which could not be easily escaped. The weekly journal warned France that she could not manage to keep colonies in the Arab world.¹⁸ Britain had realised this impossibility by conceding independence to Egypt and Libya, with the implication that France must follow suit. *The Listener* article went further by stating that there was no justification for France refusing independence to a country like Tunisia which was by far more modern than one such as Libya, granted independence in 1951.¹⁹ From this discussion it could be seen that the paper was questioning the intransigence of French policy in North Africa.

On 28 April 1955, the Labour Party MP Fenner Brockway raised the whole question of North Africa in the House of Commons. He asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs why Her Majesty's Government had given the French Government assurances of support for their policy in North Africa.²⁰ The Member of Parliament further wanted the Secretary of State to confirm if he stood by the statement made in Algiers on 20 April 1955 by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, the British Ambassador in Paris, when he said that France could count on the British Government and people to support their point of view in North Africa in every possible way. In response R.H. Turton, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that Her Majesty's Government considered that it was in their interest and that of the free world to support the declared policy of the French Government which was aimed at enabling the peoples of the overseas dependencies to take their place and play their full part in the Western democratic world.

²¹ From this one can infer that Jebb's remarks were broadly in line with the government's policy.

Writing to London in July 1955, Ambassador Jebb cautioned and urged the Government of the importance of safeguarding France's position as an international power and ally. He stated that :

*The fact that France's status as a Great Power depends directly on the maintenance of the French position in North Africa make it doubly important for both France and France's allies that French policy in Algeria should not only be progressive but wise. Moreover France will only possess the self-confidence required for a liberal approach to the Algerian problem if she considers herself assured of the unswerving support of her Western allies for the French position in that country.*²²

From the above words of Jebb it can be deduced that to some within the British political establishment, France's possession of Algeria was important for wide Western interests, possibly Cold War supremacy in that part of the world.

As stated earlier about the Philippeville attacks, the rebel killings were brutal and indiscriminate with no regard to sex or age. Casualty figures varied from one source to the other. According to the British Consul's Office in Algiers, 200 rebels were killed, 90 held prisoners and wounded; military and police killed stood at 14, with 33 wounded, and 20 civilians killed and 30 wounded.²³ The *Daily Telegraph* recorded 70 Europeans killed and 52 wounded, 31 French troops dead and 121 wounded, 15 loyal Muslims murdered and 43 sustained injuries.²⁴ In the case of the rebels the paper reported 524 deaths and 79 left with wounds. In addition 1,022 rebels were reported to be held in custody.²⁵ Most sources have settled for the figure of 123 Europeans killed and 1,273 rebel deaths,²⁶ whereas Algerians themselves claimed a wild figure of 12,000²⁷ of their own killed due to the arbitrary killing by the colonial state apparatus such as the police, troops and vigilantes. Taking into account the wide discrepancy on the figures one is tempted to accept the conservative lower one of just over a thousand casualties on the Muslim side.

As part of their information gathering and wanting to get a full picture of the Philippeville massacres, the British Government immediately despatched their military attache in Paris, Brigadier A.C.F. Jackson, to visit the areas of violent disturbances in Algeria and report on the situation. In a synopsis the Jackson report exonerated the French army from any wrongdoing and serious brutality. The report blamed the civil authorities for not supporting the army with the result that the troops found themselves in a difficult situation to which they had to react. In his report Jackson stated the following:

It is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that there have been remarkably few cases of atrocities by the French Army in North Africa up to the present. Since the August period there may have been a few cases of injustice but there is no evidence that the number is large considering the size of the force. In order to get a sense of proportion about such cases, it is perhaps worth mentioning that there have been at least four proved cases of atrocities committed by British troops or police in Kenya and they did not make pretty reading. Algeria is perhaps fifty times as big as the Mau Mau country and there are perhaps about ten times as many troops in the former as in the latter. When one recollects the French record of similar operations in North Africa, some of them quite recent,



*the present record is a very real improvement, and something of which one feels the French Army has every reason to be extremely proud.*²⁸

Such a report would no doubt have delighted the French. As far as the British government was concerned, it was calculated to confirm the stated support for the French in Algeria. But the reference to Kenya is significant where Britain was into the third year of a full scale colonial war against the Mau Mau fighters. It is quite clear that Her Majesty's Government perceived the similarity, and was equally aware of the implications namely that however good the colonial case might seem to be, it was fatally undermined by atrocity on the part of the security forces. The analogy of Kenya, applied to Algeria, shows that the British were sympathetic to the French and felt that they were both in the same boat in relation to colonial problems.

Whereas the outbreak of the war brought Algeria to the attention of the world, Philippeville was the first dramatic "media event" to hit the world's headlines. Its general effect was to put France in the wrong, and thus to drive France, and its argument that in repressing the rebellion, France was defending the free world, on to the defensive. That led quickly to the accusation that France was being betrayed by the free world, notably by the Americans. Britain as the other half of the "Anglo-Saxon" alliance, was clearly liable to its share of the blame. Nevertheless, the French were pleased with comments such as those contained in the Jackson report.

Continued British support for French actions in Algeria, by the government and in the press, was again in evidence when the Algerian question was raised again at the United Nations in September 1955. On 30 September 1955, the UN Assembly voted twenty-eight to twenty-seven to put Algeria on the agenda of the Assembly.²⁹ The Arab-Asian bloc including the Soviet Union voted in favour of the proposal. The French delegation led by Antoine Pinay walked out in protest. The British delegation voted against the proposal. This British support for France was on the grounds that discussion of colonial policy was outside the mandate of the UN Charter.³⁰ To reciprocate this favour, France supported Britain over the question of Cyprus where the British insisted that tenure of the island was strategically imperative and had distinct parallels with French policy in Algeria.³¹

The British and French stance at this session of the United Nations received positive coverage in certain sections of the British media. According to the *Spectator* the vote was a much-needed diplomatic success for France. And the vote had sent a clear message to the Asian and Arab countries that they must not push the colonial powers too far.³² For his part *The Listener's* Bickham Sweet-Escott argued that if the UN debated Algeria, then it was logical for the body to debate issues such as South Carolina, Wales or Essex,³³ and surely according to *The Listener* article the UN was not for debating such "trivial" issues. Sweet-Escott went further by challenging the Eastern bloc and Arab-Asian countries to explain what they meant by colonialism or the so-called Colonial Powers. The article further stated that there was nothing wicked about having a colony. The weekly journal called on the Communist countries to stop attacking the West since the former also had minorities in their own countries but did not want it to be said they had colonised those people. For example the Russians had Ukrainians and Mongols etc.

The Chinese had the Tibetans. *The Listener* concluded by saying that those who attack Colonial Powers like France only want to weaken the Western Alliance and serve the interests of the Communists.³⁴ *The Listener* article thus put its finger, knowingly or inadvertently, on the crux of the French position, in Algeria and on Algeria, namely that the country was both part of France, recognised as such in international law on the strength of its annexation by France in the nineteenth century, and an overseas colony of European immigrants, thinly disguised by the citizenship granted to the native muslim majority after the war, but never fully realised.

In London however, the government remained open to attack. Briefing the press in Paris on 6 March 1956 Jebb expressed British solidarity with France in Algeria. Responding to a question in the Commons on Algeria on 15 March 1956, Prime Minister Anthony Eden stated that he endorsed the speech which the British Ambassador in Paris had made on the Government's authority that Algeria was part of Metropolitan France and that Her Majesty's Government could have nothing but sympathy with the efforts of the French Government to improve conditions and preserve peace in Algeria.³⁵ In essence that was broadly the view of the House. Five days later Lloyd told the House of Commons that there was no direct or indirect help going to the French in Algeria. But the Foreign Secretary was soon to be embarrassed by his Consul in Algiers, D. J. Mill-Irving, who on the occasion of the Queen's Birthday party in front of Diplomatic Corps pledged the full support of Her Majesty's Government and of the British people for the French policy in Algeria. The Consul went further by expressing the hope that France would resume her civilising actions in Algeria. Mill-Irving's speech raised a storm in Westminster, and on 9 July 1956 the matter was raised in the august house by Anthony Benn, who wanted to know if the speech was made with the authority of the Foreign Secretary.³⁶ Lloyd's response was in diplomatic and ambiguous terms which did nothing to satisfy the questioner.

The opposition once again queried British support for France, when still on 9 July 1956 Benn took the Algerian issue further in the Commons. He wanted to know from the Foreign Secretary how many helicopters had been supplied by Britain to France for use for operations in Algeria ; how many were still on order from Britain and what was the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the supply of these aircraft for this purpose.³⁷ In response Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd stated that it had been the policy of successive Governments not to disclose details of military equipment sold to foreign Governments. In relation to policy he stated that the French Government had the full sympathy of the British Government in their efforts to re-establish peaceful conditions in Algeria. Not convinced by the answer Benn pushed the matter further by asking the Foreign Secretary if he was aware that American, French and British newspapers had reported a supply of helicopters by Britain to France including eight from the Royal Air Force (RAF). To this supplementary question, Lloyd in quite a dismissive answer stated that even if what the MP said was correct, he did not think there was anything frightfully lethal in the supply of helicopters.³⁸ Thus far, it does appear that the unstated British policy was one of offering moral and at least indirectly, military support to the French in their Algerian incubus but questions on this matter were not easily brushed aside by the front bench.

This was made explicit in July 1956 by the British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Gladwyn Jebb who wrote a dispatch to the Foreign Office suggesting that the British should come out firmly and openly in support of the French in Algeria.³⁹ He argued that the Soviet Government and the Arab League were out to threaten Western interests in Africa, so it was as much a British as a French interest to combat the threat. The action which the Ambassador recommended was a public encouragement of French policy in Algeria. Jebb argued that the French would be greatly encouraged by public statements that Britain was on their side in North Africa generally, rather than on that of the Arabs. Britain was therefore to make a candid statement that she would not let the area be used as a strategic springboard by Colonel Nasser and the Soviet Union. Secondly, Jebb recommended that instructions be given to Her Majesty's Representatives in "anti-colonial" countries. The Heads of Missions at certain posts, when speaking to the Governments to which they were accredited, should put French policy in its most favourable light.⁴⁰

The third recommendation by the diplomat was gifts of military equipment. He contended that the French would be generally encouraged if they were to receive gifts from the British of equipment such as helicopters and light aircraft, which were particularly useful for operations they were carrying out in Algeria.⁴¹ In addition, there was to be an exchange of army officers in North Africa, that is, British army officers might do a turn of duty in North Africa on an exchange basis. Lastly, Sir Gladwyn suggested that there should be military liaison arrangements between the French Army in North Africa and the British with the dual purpose of boosting French morale and of exchanging valuable experience on guerrilla warfare and infiltration tactics. The Foreign Office response was a measure of agreement on the first two recommendations but opposition to the rest.⁴² By the time action was taken on the memorandum, however, Nasser had the previous day announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and there was some thinking among Foreign Office officials that an open mind should be adopted in relation to the rejected recommendations depending on how joint Anglo-French co-operation over Suez progressed. It is to Britain's reaction to Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the Suez Crisis that ensued, and its relevance to the Algerian conflict, that this discussion now turns.

c. Britain and Egypt, 1945 to Nationalisation of Canal, 1956

Article 16 of the 1866 agreement between Egypt and the Suez Canal Company, stipulated that the Suez Canal Company was Egyptian and was subject to the laws and customs of Egypt.⁴³ The Convention of 1888 had not changed the status of the Canal Company, while its provisions were not to affect the sovereign rights of Egypt. In the Preamble to the Convention of 1888 it was stated that there should be established a "definite system destined to guarantee at all times, and for all the Powers, the free use of the Canal."⁴⁴ Such a system, which would be established with due regard to the sovereign rights of Egypt, should assure efficient and dependable operation, and the maintenance and development of the Canal as a free open secure international waterway.⁴⁵ From the preceding discussion it can be seen that the legalistic language used in the agreement

governing the canal was ambiguous, and provided room for manoeuvre for Egypt or any of the countries having a stake in the Canal.

The question was not simply commercial. Since its construction the Suez Canal occupied an essential position in the British imperial system, linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The Canal's strategic importance was the main motive for the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. Ever since the end of the First World War the control of the Suez Canal continued to be the basis of British power in the Middle East. Britain assured her position in the region with the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 which established the British position in the Suez Canal Zone, allowed for the stationing of 10,000 troops in Egypt during peacetime, and confirmed Egypt's pivotal position in Britain's "informal" Middle Eastern empire.⁴⁶ During the Second World War the Egyptian nationalist movement for independence was repressed by the British. After the war, however, the British presence in the Middle East was increasingly resented and challenged by the Egyptians, who felt that the British had betrayed the Arabs, especially in the British support for the creation of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948.

In 1949 the Suez Canal agreement was renegotiated and gave Egypt a mere seven per cent of gross profits and only a minor presence on the board of directors.⁴⁷ In monetary terms this translated to about \$3 million yearly. In 1951, however, the Egyptian government decided to repudiate the 1936 treaty and also refused to join the British favoured Middle East Command. Repudiation of the treaty was met with scenes of great jubilation in the streets of Egypt, everything British was attacked, persons as well as property. The turning point for the British presence in Egypt came in January 1952 when there were civil disturbances in the country instigated by the Egyptian nationalists. British property was burnt and some Britons killed. Seizing on this political unrest the Free Officers in the military staged a *coup d'etat* against the British-backed monarchical government of King Farouk in July 1952. One of the coup leaders in the army was the young and charismatic Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser who became Prime Minister of Egypt in 1954, after deposing General Mohammed Neguib. The new Egyptian rulers were as much opposed as the previous ones to British presence in both Egypt and the Sudan.

Britain and Egypt reached an agreement in October 1954 over Suez. The British were to evacuate the Canal and this was to be completed within twenty months, subject to rights of re-entry in the event of an attack on any Middle East country.⁴⁸ During these negotiations for evacuation of the Canal, divergence in British and American policies in the region came to the fore. The Americans whose overriding concern in the region was the Cold War with the Soviet Union believed that Egypt's goodwill might be secured by establishing some cordial relations with its new leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, whereas to the British the loss of Suez was a serious blow. In February 1955 Turkey and Iran, concerned about the Soviet Union, signed a defence pact in Baghdad, which they were encouraged to do by Britain. Britain joined in April, and it became known as the Baghdad Pact.⁴⁹ It is important to note that that the Pact came about as a result of a 1953 American initiative to create the "Northern Tier," which was a defence system from Turkey to Pakistan as a means of containing the Soviet Union threat. Britain saw the

Baghdad Pact as a potential force for order in the Middle East, but to Nasser the strengthening of the monarchical Hashemite regime in Iraq, which was Egypt's main regional rival, was a hostile act.⁵⁰ Furthermore, to Nasser the real threat in the region was not the Soviets, but the Jewish State of Israel. From now onwards Nasser opposed the Baghdad Pact, which to Britain was a sign that Nasser was a threat to the region's security and stability.

British Prime Minister Anthony Eden's hatred of Nasser pre-dated the Suez crisis of 1956. At the end of 1954 the United States and Britain embarked on a secret project code-named *Alpha* in the Middle East.⁵¹ This project was aimed at bringing about an Arab-Israeli settlement. Project *Alpha* to be successful had to involve painful sacrifices on the part of Israel, that is, she was to surrender some territory as part of the price for Arab recognition. In the early months of the project, there were signs that it was progressing quite well. The Americans, because of the powerful Jewish lobby in that country were compelled to make the *Alpha* Project public. The news was cautiously and politely received throughout the Middle East. The prospect of some kind of peace settlement, guaranteed by the United States and Great Britain raised hopes in the region. The project, however, was thrown into disarray in September 1955 when Egypt signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia which was a Soviet satellite in Eastern Europe.

Both Washington and London were angered, irritated and dismayed by this development. Britain, especially was concerned at the long-term implications for her regional dominance. Eden's initial reaction was telling particularly bearing in mind what happened later in 1956. He requested some vital information from the British Ambassador in Cairo, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan. The Ambassador was to furnish London with information pertaining to an estimate "as to Nasser's present position, the extent of his support, and the chances of any rival."⁵² The reply from the British Cairo Mission was discouraging as it was stated in categorical words that "there are no reliable signs of the regime losing its grip of the situation or its opponents gaining ground."⁵³ After Eden and his Cabinet had been briefed by Foreign Office Middle East experts about the difficulties of dealing with Egypt and the strategic economic importance of the region, the British government now decided to adopt a strategy of "appeasement"⁵⁴ towards the Egyptian leaders. Part of this "appeasement" was to be British support, albeit, not financially, of the Aswan High Dam Project by Egypt. Britain was to be the midwife and encourage America to put resources towards the envisaged huge project. But British-American peace plans for the Middle East were finally scuppered in March 1956. The Egyptian-Israeli agreement was abandoned due to the uncompromising stances of Nasser and the Israeli Prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. Then, Britain and America agreed a joint strategy for Egypt. The plan, code-named *Omega*, was adopted, the aim of which was to destabilise the Nasser regime "through propaganda and a series of economic and political measures."⁵⁵

Increased loathing for Nasser by Eden was once again in evidence in March 1956. On 1 March 1956, the pro-British King Hussein of Jordan dismissed the British General Sir John Glubb as head of the Jordanian Army. Eden, for his own reasons, believed that Nasser's hand was behind King Hussein's move, moreso that Egyptian propaganda

through Radio Cairo had permeated the whole of Jordan and increasingly made the King's position vulnerable. So, King Hussein was under mounting pressure to distance his regime from the British. Eden's irritation against Nasser appeared to have no limits. Sir Anthony Nutting, then Minister of State at the Foreign Office and protege of the Prime Minister, summed up Eden's reaction to Glubb's sacking in the following behaviour and words :

*Eden's reaction to Glubb's dismissal was violent. He blamed Nasser and decided that the world just wasn't big enough to hold both of them. One had to go. He declared that night a personal war on Abdel Nasser. I spent most of that night with him, first in the Cabinet room and then, when he retired to bed, I sat with him and we went on arguing until five o'clock in the morning. He simply would not accept that the dismissal of Glubb was not Nasser's doing...*⁵⁶

So, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal only served as a spark to what had always been Eden's intent, the undermining of the Egyptian regime and ultimately the removal of Nasser from the world political scene.

d. The Suez Crisis

The Suez Canal crisis which began in July 1956 set in motion a delicate unity of purpose between Britain and France. The crisis reached its peak in October 1956. During this crisis both Britain and France agreed to use force against Egypt, while their collusion with Israel and their subsequent actions were heavily opposed by the United States. This Anglo-French axis of fragile unity was aimed at "regime change" in Egypt. Despite the coming together of these two European colonial powers, the motives were different. For France the overriding factor was Algeria whereas for Britain it was the wider Middle East interests which she felt were threatened by "Nasserism" and communist penetration.

Though the Suez crisis especially in Britain was presented in economic terms, that is, Nasser's illegal seizure of an international waterway, political considerations became the dominant factor in the crisis. In this section of this chapter an attempt is made to see the extent to which both Britain and France were able to persuade one another that Algeria should be an issue in the crisis. Broadly speaking it does not appear that the Algerian war was enough to persuade Britain to collude with France against Egypt. The central issue that seems to have finally convinced Britain to act concertedly with France against Egypt was the convergence of their colonial programme or interests in that sphere of the world.

Ownership of the Canal was under an international company dominated by British and French shareholders. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956. This was cleverly done as it happened a month after the British had evacuated the Suez zone base. The pretext that Nasser used was that the Western Powers had refused to finance the Aswan Dam project, which was to be the basis of Egyptian economic independence. For Britain Nasser's action seemed to pose the gravest threat to vital British interests. As Christopher Goldsmith put it, Nasser's action was seen as jeopardising the whole British position in the Middle East, a key strategic region in geopolitical terms.⁵⁷ The Canal was, of course,

important to Britain. British ships were the largest users of the Canal, carrying both imports and export in large volume. A large percentage of the oil required for the British economy came through the Canal from the Middle East. So if the Canal were mismanaged or not expanded for future needs Britain would suffer first and most. Nasser, said Prime Minister Eden, could not be allowed to "have his thumb on our wind pipe."⁵⁸ As the events unfolded Eden appointed a seven-man inner group of the Cabinet called the Egypt Committee or Britain's "War Cabinet" to deal with the crisis.

The British Government perceived the seizure of the Canal endangering much more than the Canal itself. What was at stake was the whole British position in the Middle East. London believed that, if Nasser was not brought under control he would exploit Arab nationalism to dominate the region, including the sources of Middle Eastern oil which had become vital for the British and European economies. One Bank of England official was said to have warned that Egyptian nationalisation "imperilled the survival of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, and represented a very great danger to sterling."⁵⁹ Harold Macmillan as Chancellor of the Exchequer supported Eden's tough stance of military action. In Macmillan's view, Nasser could block the Suez Canal and once this happened it would require a massive American loan to provide dollars to purchase oil supplies from Latin America.⁶⁰ From the onset of the crisis the Eden Administration contemplated the use of force to resolve the problem, which would be bitterly opposed by the United States throughout.

The first of the British Prime Minister's bellicose positions was stated in a message relayed to President Dwight Eisenhower of the United States on 27 July 1956. It read thus:

*This morning I have reviewed the whole position with my Cabinet colleagues and Chiefs of Staff. We are all agreed that we cannot afford to allow Nasser to seize control of the Canal in this way, in defiance of international agreements. If we take a firm stand over this now, we shall have the support of maritime powers. If we do not, our influence and yours throughout the Middle East will, we are concerned, be further destroyed....My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses.*⁶¹

The above British message attempted to present the Suez Canal issue as a trans-atlantic Western problem that had to be confronted immediately. Implicit in this statement was that Western interests would be threatened in the region by other outside forces, possible reference being to the Soviet Union.

France's policy in the Suez Crisis closely paralleled Britain's. Though there were economic interests at stake, it does appear that political concerns were paramount. Economically, though less so for Britain, a considerable percentage of French oil supply came through the Canal Company. Thousands of French investors held about half the shares of the Canal Company, and its main office was in Paris and its general manager French.⁶² Yet deep animosity to Nasser was the prime factor in French policy. The key to that antagonism was the Algerian rebellion which had erupted in November 1954. Despite heavily expanded forces France had failed to suppress the rebels. In their

frustration French leaders, including Prime Minister, Guy Mollet, attributed their failure largely to Nasser's support of the Algerian rebels. For some time, Nasser had indeed provided supplies, aid and encouragement to the Algerian nationalists not least through Cairo radio.

Just like the British government the French authorities suspected that Nasser had wide ambitions to dominate the Middle East and North Africa. In March 1956, Christian Pineau, the French Foreign Minister, had visited Cairo mainly to discuss Algeria. On his return to Paris, he told the National Assembly that Nasser had assured him that Egypt was not training Algerian guerrillas, but Nasser had made no similar pledge about shipping arms.⁶³ Despite these Egyptian half-hearted assurances the French were firmly convinced that toppling Nasser was the only way to defeat the Algerian rebellion. Robert Lacoste, the French Resident Minister in Algeria, was later quoted as saying "Better one French division in Egypt than four divisions in Algeria."⁶⁴ Thus for France, the nationalisation of the Canal presented both a provocation and a pretext. According to Pineau, if Egypt were allowed to succeed in grabbing the Canal, the Algerian nationalists would be given new encouragement in their struggle.

Beyond the Algerian war, there was an urge within the French establishment to wipe out the memory of a succession of humiliating failures; the defeat of 1940; Indo-China; and Morocco and Tunisia, which had just been relinquished. So the French desperately needed a victory to bolster their self-esteem, the more so since the morale of the army was very low. In Robert Bowie's words, interviews taken at the peak of the Suez Crisis are highly revealing of the state of mind of the French elite, one was said to have uttered the following words:

*We are trying to turn history back, to wipe out the stains of Munich which led to our defeat in 1940 and our failure to prevent Hitler from taking over the Rhineland in 1936....Nasser is the symbol of all France's enemies....of all France's humiliation in the past.*⁶⁵

In an article in the *Spectator*, Darsie Gillie stated that the unanimity in the French press in demanding a vigorous Western counter-stroke to Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal was surprising.⁶⁶ He contended that most Frenchmen detested what the Suez Canal Company stood for, so the unity of the French was not for the Canal *per se*. But what was at stake was that France hoped that a strike at Nasser would lead to a solution of her North African problems which if not solved, would leave her no place on the south shore of the Mediterranean or ultimately in Africa.⁶⁷ According to the *Spectator* article, for long Frenchmen had felt that they were fighting Nasser in Algeria and that in Tunisia and Morocco the problem had been to reach agreement with those nationalists who wished to reject the domination of Cairo.⁶⁸ French unanimity was based on the conviction that if Nasser got away with it, the vigour of the rebellion in Algeria would double and the moderate nationalists in Tunis and Rabat would have to identify themselves with the extremists in order to retain any support. The article concluded by stating that France was now making big sacrifices in the hope of creating a situation in which the two million Europeans in the Maghreb could continue to live there, and her vast West African territories could remain in close political association with France. Also the exploitation

of the mineral wealth of the Sahara had become one of the great hopes of France's future.⁶⁹ This was a reference to the large reserves of oil and gas that had been identified in the Algerian Sahara, which promised to transform the struggling French economy, and make Algeria into a major economic asset – a good reason for the French to resist Algerian demands for independence.

From the beginning of the crisis the United States opposed any use of force before all peaceful means for resolving the issue had been exhausted. This did not deter Eden from presenting Nasser as a fascist-style dictator to the Americans. In one of his correspondences to Eisenhower, Prime Minister Eden stated that :

*...Nasser has embarked on a course which is unpleasantly familiar. His seizure of the Canal was undoubtedly designed to impress opinion not only in Egypt but in the Arab world and in all Africa too. By this assertion of his power he seeks to further his ambitions from Morocco to the Persian Gulf ...I know that Nasser is active wherever Muslims can be found even as far as Nigeria ...I have never thought Nasser a Hitler, he has no warlike people behind him. But the parallel with Mussolini is close ...The removal of Nasser and the installation in Egypt of a regime less hostile to the West, must therefore also rank high among our objectives.*⁷⁰

Although Algeria was not mentioned, it was clearly included in this reference to Nasser's appetite to expand his influence in the Muslim world.

In opposing the use of military force against Egypt, President Eisenhower sent the following letter to Eden :

*From the moment that Nasser announced nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, my thoughts have been constantly with you ...But early this morning I received the messages communicated to me through Murphy from you and Harold Macmillan, telling me on a most secret basis your decision to employ force without delay or attempting any intermediate and less drastic steps...For my part, I cannot over-emphasise the strength of my conviction that some such method must be attempted before action such as you contemplate should be undertaken. If unfortunately the situation can finally be resolved only by drastic means there should be no grounds for belief anywhere that corrective measures were undertaken merely to protect national or individual investors or that the legal rights of a sovereign nation were ruthlessly flouted. A conference, at the very least, should have a great educational effect throughout the world. Public opinion here and I am convinced in most of the world, would be outraged should there be a failure to make such efforts. Moreover, initial military successes might be easy but the eventual price might become far too heavy. I have given you my personal conviction, as well as of that of my associates, as to the unwisdom even of contemplating the use of military force at this moment...I personally feel sure that the American reaction would be severe and that great areas of the world would share that reaction.*⁷¹

This was the first warning by President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Eden that in the

view of the American administration the use of force to resolve the dispute was unacceptable. These warnings would be repeated consistently throughout the crisis. In Washington on 8 August 1956 the President's friend and Defence Secretary, Charles Wilson described Nasser's grab of the canal as a "relatively small thing."⁷² He said that Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal Company "can be settled by a conference rather than by waving a big stick and threatening people." Wilson went further to state that American military policy could not "flip up and down" because of a minor thing. He added "I hope this will be a local friction and not something which will involve East and West."⁷³ Finally he said that they should all seek honourable means of reaching a peaceful settlement.

As the Crisis unfolded and reached critical moments, divisions within the British public and Fleet Street became pronounced. Right-wing papers such as the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph* supported the Government's position of ultimately using force. The left-wing *Daily Mirror* was in the forefront of the papers warning Eden against the use of military force. It called on the Prime Minister to rid his mind of the dangerous delusions from which he was suffering about the state of British public opinion in this challenging but changing situation.⁷⁴ It warned him against being influenced by what the paper called sabre-rattlers and gunboat diplomats. The former in an unusual attack, it identified as right-wing papers such as *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*.⁷⁵ In a prophetic and ominous fashion the *Daily Mirror* warned Eden that failure to resolve the problem in a statesmanlike way would cost him his Premiership. The paper's article concluded by stating that world opinion from the United States, Arab States and Asia was against military action. It further cautioned Eden from paying too much attention to the applause that he was getting from France since the latter would be of little help, because she was already bogged down in a bloody war against Arab nationalism in Algeria.⁷⁶

Various attempts at resolving the dispute through peaceful means were undertaken. At a meeting between US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles and British and French leaders on the other hand in London in early August, the Americans proposed the holding of a maritime conference of Canal users. The British though with some reservations agreed to this American proposal, and the French followed suit. The Conference of Maritime Nations duly met between 16 and 23 August 1956 at Lancaster House in London. Of the thirty-two nations attending, eighteen supported an American-led resolution which called upon Egypt to accept that the Canal should be run by an international board and it should not be closed to any user for political reasons.⁷⁷ At the end of the London conference, a five-man mission headed by Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies was despatched to Cairo to put the plan before Nasser, but the mission failed as Nasser flatly rejected the proposal. As this happened Britain and France were already drawing up a plan for combined operations if it became necessary to use force to recapture the Suez Canal. In the meantime, President Eisenhower restated America's hope that the dispute should be settled through peaceful means. In a September 3, 1956 letter to Eden, the President warned against the negative consequences of the use of force, he stated the following :

I really do not see how a successful result could be achieved by forcible means. The use of force would it seems vastly increase the area of

*jeopardy, I do not see how the economy of Western Europe can long survive the burden of prolonged military operations, as well as the denial of Near East oil. All the peoples of the Near East and North Africa, and, to some extent, of all Asia and all of Africa, would be consolidated against the West to a degree which I fear could not be overcome in a generation and, perhaps, not even a century particularly having in mind the capacity of the Russians to make mischief.*⁷⁸

On 4 September 1956, Dulles recommended to both Britain and France the convening of another international conference in London; the French were very hostile to this proposal but later consented.

In its leading article on 15 September 1956, the *New Statesman* accused the French of desperately hoping that the problem of the Suez Canal could be used to involve Britain in their war against Arab nationalism in Algeria.⁷⁹ By involving Britain the French hoped to relieve their struggling administration of some of the pressure which French official opinion claimed largely to originate from Cairo. Alexander Werth reporting for the *New Statesman* on the growing crisis in Algeria argued that the French policy of "pacification" was failing to produce the desired results, and blamed this on Robert Lacoste (Resident-General).⁸⁰ Most French officials in Algeria however, believed that all the evil in the colony was coming from Cairo, Cairo radio, and from Nasser's friends, Ben Bella and Ferhat Abbas,⁸¹ and hoped that if Britain and France invaded Egypt and overthrew Nasser, it would be the end of the war in Algeria.

A conference of eighteen nations duly met between 19 and 21 September 1956 and set up a body known as the Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA). With this the threat of military action seemed to have temporarily receded and there were hopes that a diplomatic solution might be found. This respite was however shortlived, as suddenly out of the blue the use of force was revived, with a new player on the scene. This was Israel. French-Israeli contacts antedated the Suez crisis. From 1954 on, Franco-Israeli links grew closer, leading to substantial arms sales, including an agreement to furnish planes in November 1955. Soon after becoming Prime Minister early in 1956, Mollet described French relationship with Israel as the assistance to a small, courageous, democratic nation threatened by aggressive neighbours, especially Nasser, who, as it happened, was accused of helping to fuel the Algerian revolt.⁸² French-Israeli collusion over Suez began in early August 1956 when French Defence Minister Maurice Bourges-Maunoury and a senior official in the Israeli Defence

Ministry, Shimon Perez, signed an arms deal in which France was to provide arms to Israel.

On 26-27 September 1956, Eden and Lloyd visited Mollet and Pineau in Paris in order to concert strategy. The two British politicians found the French to be stubbornly resolute about the necessity of bringing down Nasser by force as soon as possible. The "tough and uncompromising" position of the French impressed Eden, who saw; "the beginning of something like a renaissance of strength in France."⁸³ Israel's blatant involvement in the crisis became apparent on 30 September to 1 October 1956, when Foreign Minister

Golder Meir and Chief of Staff, General Moshe Dayan from the Israeli side met Christian Pineau the Foreign Minister and Deputy Chief of Air Staff General Maurice Challe from the French side for high level talks in Paris. The French were less inhibited than the British about co-operating directly with Israel to destroy Nasser, since their credibility and reputation had already been eroded in the Arab eyes because of the Algerian conflict. Israeli participation in the collusion between the British and the French was first raised by Chancellor of Exchequer Harold Macmillan, one of the leading hawks in the Egypt Committee, but was swiftly dismissed by Eden on the grounds that this would unite all the Arab countries of the Middle East against Britain. France on the other hand had hardly any standing left to lose by intervening with Israel, while for both countries Nasser was seen as the common enemy.

On 14 October 1956, Prime Minister Eden received two French envoys, Acting Foreign Minister Albert Gazier and General Maurice Challe, at his country home Chequers to discuss Israel participation in the dispute. At this meeting, the Anglo-French military option had been revived and the idea of working with the Israelis had been approved by both sides. The Chequers meeting no doubt was a turning point in the crisis. In order to formalise the collusion plans, Britain, France and Israel held a secret meeting at Sevres outside Paris on 22 October 1956. Those attending included Ben-Gurion (Israeli Prime Minister), Moshe Dayan (Israeli Chief of Staff), Shimon Perez, Guy Mollet, Christian Pineau, Bourges-Maunoury, Selwyn Lloyd and Patrick Dean (Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office). The outcome was a secret three-power agreement setting out the timetable and moves in the concerted attacks by Britain, France and Israel. Israel was to attack on 29 October 1956, and seem to threaten the Canal. The British and French, acting ostensibly to protect the Canal and separate the combatants, would issue an ultimatum calling on Israel and Egypt to accept temporary occupation of key positions on the Canal by the Anglo-French forces to guarantee freedom of passage through the Canal by vessels of all nations until a final settlement was found. During these clandestine tripartite meetings and planning the Americans were kept in the dark.

As planned by the conspirators, Israel attacked Egypt on 29 October 1956. The attack began by the dropping of paratroops at the Mitla Pass, forty miles from the Suez Canal, and was followed up with a military thrust into the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. The following day both Britain and France sent their prearranged ultimatums to Egypt and Israel. In the House of Commons Eden explained the attack.⁸⁴ Meanwhile at the United Nations, the United States had tabled a resolution before the Security Council that labelled Israel as the aggressor and required it cease all hostilities against Egypt. The American resolution was vetoed by both Britain and France, as was a later Soviet Union resolution. On 31 October 1956, Anglo-French air attacks were launched against Egyptian targets and the United Nations Security Council called an emergency meeting of the General Assembly. In the House of Commons, Selwyn Lloyd misled the House by denying collusion with Israel. British-American relations were now at their lowest ebb. Dissent against Anglo-French action peaked in Britain on the weekend of 3-4 November 1956. The opposition Labour Party escalated its onslaught on the Government's decision. At the United Nations, Britain and her allies faced a barrage of criticism in the Security Council for their military adventure in Egypt from a wide range of countries

including the United States and some Commonwealth countries. The General Assembly voted sixty-four to five for the American resolution for an immediate cease-fire.⁸⁵ On the morning of 4 November 1956, the General Assembly adopted a second resolution, this one asking the body's Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld to arrange a cease-fire within twelve hours.⁸⁶

Justifying their action to President Eisenhower on 5 November 1956 Eden issued the following statement :

*It is a great grief to me that the events of the last few days have placed such a strain on the relations between our two countries. Of course I realise your feelings about the action which we felt compelled to take at such short notice...I am convinced that, if we had allowed things to drift, everything would have gone from bad to worse. Nasser would have become a kind of Moslem Mussolini and our friends in Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and even Iran would gradually have been brought down. His efforts would have spread west wards, and Libya and all of North Africa would have been brought under his control...We and the French were convinced that we had to act once to forestall a general conflagration throughout the Middle East.*⁸⁷

To the United States the attack on Egypt was a gross misjudgement on the part of Britain and France. Even if the attack succeeded in discrediting and dislodging Nasser, Washington was worried about the long-range damage to Western influence in the Arab region, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Furthermore, the United States wanted to prevent the Soviet Union from capitalising on the attack for Cold War supremacy. So, American pressure and the international uproar that was caused forced both Britain and France to abruptly bring military hostilities to an end.

e. Conclusion

British interest in Algeria began to grow after the outbreak of the rebellion in November 1954. This was shown by the reports and comments that were coming from Her Majesty's diplomatic missions abroad. Even within the press a week hardly passed without an article or story on the war in Algeria. The British position since the beginning of the war up to the Suez Crisis was to give implicit moral support to French policy in Algeria as a fellow colonial power, although there were dissenting voices in certain quarters. From 1955 onwards Algeria became a common subject of debate among British legislators as this had a bearing on Britain's colonial status.

The Suez Canal crisis intensified and extended the international reverberations of the Algerian conflict. In so doing, it provoked a division in the Western alliance that brought out the contradictions in Western thinking between the defence of the West, the defence of empire, and the need for decolonisation. Where the British and French associated the defence of empire with the defence of the West, the Americans preferred to associate the defence of the West with decolonisation. At the level of relations between the two imperial powers, there were further differences. Whereas France attacked Egypt in the hope of ending the Algerian colonial problem, Britain entered into this venture for her

own wider Middle East interests, not to save or help France from her colonial nightmare. As one historian has put it, Franco-British co-operation over Suez was a marriage of convenience rather than a long-term commitment to a joint policy in the Middle East.⁸⁸ In the case of Britain the biggest casualty of the Suez fiasco was Prime Minister Eden, his Chancellor the beneficiary. The Americans were angered by the fact that the planning for the Suez attack was done behind their back and were kept in the dark by their European allies especially Great Britain. France believed that victory was snatched from her by United States pressure. So, the end of the crisis meant that she had to divert all her resources to Algeria to prove a point. The Suez Crisis was one of those rare moments that Britain and America found themselves at odds with each other. It is to the mending of fences in the Anglo-American alliance that the next chapter discusses and how *les Anglo-Saxons* came back in full swing to criticise French conduct in Algeria from 1957 onwards. The outcome was that Britain realigned itself with the United States on the principle that the defence of the West went hand in hand with decolonisation, while France was driven into isolation. Her argument that the defence of empire, in Algeria, was essential for the defence of the West was effectively rejected. She was left alone to fight what proved to be a hopeless battle.

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CHAPTER 5

ALGERIAN WAR, END OF 1956 TO MAY 1958

a. Introduction

As stated in the conclusion to the previous chapter, the Suez Crisis elevated Harold Macmillan to the British premiership. One of his major tasks was to repair the Anglo-American "special relationship". This he did through summits at Bermuda in March 1957 and Washington in October respectively. His mission succeeded as the Anglo-American alliance was put on the right footing whereas Anglo-French relations became a hot potato, the issue being Algeria. 1957 began with what was called the "battle of Algiers," at the same time the Algerian problem became internationalised. In this chapter an attempt is being made to dissect the intricate events of 1957 before moving to the bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef in February 1958. This saw Anglo-American "special relationship" in full swing as the two Western Powers endeavoured to broker peace between France and Tunisia through their "good offices," one of the factors that contributed in May 1958 to the fall of the Fourth Republic.

b. Course of the war, end of 1956 to end of Battle of Algiers

An account of the war for this period is given for British government purposes in Consular Reports for 1957 to 1958.¹ The "Battle of Algiers" lasted for nearly nine months from January to September 1957. It was preceded by major events as 1956 drew to a close, which were centred around the city of Algiers where most Europeans resided. In mid-1956 two FLN fighters who had been under sentence for months were executed by the French authorities in Algeria. The executions were politically motivated, as Robert Lacoste (Governor-General) wanted to please the colons so that they would support his *loi-cadre* (basic law or outline law). The FLN then took the decision to embark on urban terrorism. This idea of urban terrorism was the brainchild of Ramdane Abane who, after the Philippeville uprising, came to believe that terror pays. The attacks were orchestrated by Saadi Yacef, Commander of the Autonomous Region of Algiers. Throughout November and December 1956 a series of terrorist bomb attacks took place in Algiers. These were especially notorious because of the part played by three middle-class women, namely, Zohra Drift, Djamila Bouhired and Samia Lakhdari, who placed bombs in a student dance spot, the fashionable milk bar on the Place Bugeaud, and in the down town terminal of Air France.² Two of these bombs exploded causing considerable damage especially the one at the Milk-bar. On the whole three Europeans were killed, scores were wounded including children. Only the third bomb placed by Djamila Bouhired in the hall of the Air France terminus failed to detonate. The climax came with the assassination in December of that year of the Mayor Amédée Froger, President of the Federation of Mayors of Algeria³ and political leader of the European right extremists.

As terror raged on throughout the city, Governor-General Lacoste put in place counter measures. These were the responsibility of the commander-in-chief, Raoul Salan, and

General Jacques Massu, commander of the Tenth Paratroop Regiment, still bitter about the Suez fiasco. On 8 January 1957 Lacoste officially granted Massu the onerous task of maintaining law and order in Algiers. By granting such powers to the army, Lacoste delivered the government of Algeria still further into the hands of the military. Massu's men embarked upon the destruction of the terrorist network through any means at their disposal. The first task for Massu and his men was to break a week's "insurrectionary general strike" called by the FLN in Algiers and other towns. The strike began on 28 January 1957. The strike did not last long as it was effectively broken after two days by the full might of the French forces. Muslims were arrested at random and systematic institutionalised torture became the regular French police and army intelligence policy of interrogation. Through their cruel and inhumane methods Massu's paratroops of the tenth division were able to destroy the terrorist organisation in the city. In the countryside, the French established centres of regroupment where thousands of Algerians were resettled in camps surrounded by barbed wire, and where they lived for months in appalling conditions. As some Algerians fled into Tunisia and Morocco because of the fighting in the interior the French moved in to secure the borders of these countries. This was done through the erection of the electrified fence called the Morice Line, named after the then French Minister of National Defence Andre Morice.

The FLN was now heavily defeated in the major cities and its units more isolated in the countryside than ever before. On the one hand those who managed to escape across the border regrouped in Tunisia and Morocco and formed the ALN (National Liberation Army) which became the military wing of the FLN. Some internal leaders such as Ben Mhidi were not so lucky as he was captured and executed by the French. There is no doubt that the battle of Algiers was the most testing time for the Algerian freedom fighters and showed how determined the French were in keeping French Algeria. Though the French won this battle militarily, however, the victory was a pyrrhic one. The two societies were more than ever further apart and hated each other greatly. With most internal leaders of the FLN now forced into exile, a political vacuum was created in the movement in Algeria. As a result, the external leadership assumed the direction of the movement. The first meeting of the external leadership was in Cairo in July 1957 at which the CNRA decided to raise the membership of the CCE from five to nine. One of the new additions being Ferhat Abbas⁴ who had now joined the struggle after seeing the futility of his assimilationist tendencies. The Cairo gathering reversed Soummam Valley decisions establishing the primacy of the interior and the superiority of the political over the military. By September 1957 the battle of Algiers was over.

Meanwhile the French were in trouble both at home and abroad. As the battle of Algiers began the Algerian question was debated at the Eleventh United Nations General Assembly session in February 1957. France participated in this debate, but with a very serious reservation made at the beginning, to the effect that France would be unable to accept any action by the United Nations. France questioned the competence of the international body in dealing with the issue, on the legal ground that the Algerian problem was within her domestic jurisdiction,⁵ since Algeria was a part of France. The French position was in accordance with the programme set forth by Premier Guy Mollet upon taking office in January, 1956. The programme was based on the notion that

Algeria was part of metropolitan France, but proposed:

*To recognise and respect the Algerian personality and to achieve political equality of all inhabitants..., to hold as soon as possible a popular referendum through free elections to a single electoral college..., to effect the immediate release of political prisoners.*⁶

Its implementation had so far been deferred; nevertheless the UN debate on Algeria ended with a compromise resolution to the effect that "a peaceful, democratic and just solution would be found."

By March 1957 however, France was facing insurmountable difficulties both at home and abroad. For instance on 30 March 1957, Morocco and Tunisia signed a treaty in Rabat pledging their "good offices" in finding a just solution to the Algerian problem. At the same time execution of the war in Algeria was putting a strain on the economy. Moreover, there was mounting criticism of the Government at home and abroad for atrocities committed by the army authorities against the Algerian population. As a direct consequence of this, on 6 April 1957 a permanent Human Rights Commission was appointed in Algeria.⁷ A combination of these factors contributed to the fall of the Mollet Government on 21 May 1957; and a new government was formed by Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury. The irony of it all was that it adopted the policies of the previous government, and immediately requested a tax increase to carry on the war.

In mid-1957 negotiations were opened between France and Algerian representatives. These, however, did not bear any fruits and subsequently collapsed. On 16 July, 1957, twenty-two Afro-Asian countries requested that the Algerian question be inscribed on the agenda of the UN Twelfth Assembly. An explanatory memorandum was appended to this request, accusing the French army of genocide against the Algerian people. Clearly from the above Algeria had now become an international issue.

Politically, during the course of 1957 the French Government attempted to create a new political framework within which a solution could be found, by implementing the Mollet programme of the previous year. This led to the presentation of the *loi cadre* (basic law) to the French Parliament in September 1957. The *loi cadre*, it was explained, sought absolute equality for all citizens, limited local autonomy, and the development of Algerian institutions.⁸ Furthermore, the *loi cadre*'s purpose was to "respect Algerian identity" while also keeping Algeria "an integral part of France"⁹ two aims that were difficult to reconcile. In reality the French purpose through the *loi cadre* was to divide or break Algeria into autonomous territories or *departments* opposed to each other. The goal was to destroy Algerian nationalism by playing upon regionalism and ethnic loyalties or rivalries. As with all other colonial powers France wanted to apply the idea of "divide and rule" in Algeria. But because the *loi cadre* further promised future elections with all inhabitants of Algeria voting, this incensed the Algerian European settlers and the right extremists. The result was that the French Parliament rejected the *loi cadre* on 30 September 1957 and Bourgès-Maunoury's Government fell.¹⁰ The succeeding Government of Felix Gaillard now accepted a watered-down *loi cadre* after some amendments. In Algeria, it was accepted neither by the Algerians nor the colons.

The year 1957 closed with the Algerian issue back at the United Nations, which adopted a compromise resolution on 10 December 1957.¹¹ The resolution took note of the offer of good offices made by Morocco and Tunisia and expressed the hope that talks be held toward a solution of the Algerian problem. In mid November 1957 the UK and US announced the shipment of arms to Tunisia; France protested or objected on the grounds that the arms would be sent to the Algerian rebels. On 14 December 1957 the Human Rights Commission report was published, and did not make good reading on the subject of the French army's activities in Algeria.

c. Britain, post-Suez, and Africa, end of 1956 to March 1958

Harold Macmillan was elevated to the British premiership against the backdrop of the Suez debacle of 1956. It does appear that he was not as committed to the Empire as his predecessors, Churchill and Eden. Macmillan appears to have been a political adventurer who was not afraid to change position on issues as long as it suited his purpose. This was exemplified by his position during the Suez crisis, when he was one of the hawkish members of the cabinet, but at the height of the crisis was the first to urge a *volte-face*. Meanwhile he recognised that African nationalism was a force, which could not be resisted. The Mau Mau insurrection in Kenya had demonstrated how costly in lives and money a counter-insurgency campaign could be.¹² The uprising had also shown the futility of using force to dampen nationalist sentiments. Macmillan's realisation of the dangers of force was reinforced by the painful French experiences in Indochina and Algeria, as well as by the Suez fiasco. Suez had revealed the depth of anti-colonial feeling in the international arena. It was clear to British politicians such as Macmillan that any use of British troops to suppress a nationalist uprising in Africa would be met with worldwide condemnation. Furthermore, Macmillan recognised that the economic advantages of the colonies were no longer significant enough to justify maintaining the Empire.

But although the British premier was firmly convinced of the need to address the African problem before it got too late, and was said to have persuaded himself that Colonial Empire was an albatross, his colonial policy from 1957 until 1960 was characterised by caution. His motivation for this cautious approach was the overriding need to heal the wounds inflicted on the Conservative Party by the Suez Crisis. Speaking to Lord Swinton, he said;

*Our first objective must be to keep the party together, at all costs united. It's like keeping five balls in the air simultaneously, knowing that we are doomed if we drop one.*¹³

As a consequence of this Macmillan decided not to undertake any initiative that might divide the party. There was still in the Conservative Party back-bench a significant group that argued that Britain must keep the Empire and were equally ardent supporters of the European populations in Central and East Africa. They wanted Britain to safeguard the interests of these settlers all the time.

On becoming Prime Minister in January 1957, Macmillan commissioned a Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee to determine which colonies might become self-governing in the near future, which ones would become eligible to join the Commonwealth, and what should be the fate of those ineligible for entry.¹⁴ Macmillan wrote the following to the Lord President of the Council (Lord Salisbury) on 28 January 1957:

*I should like to see something like a profit and loss account for each of our colonial possessions, so that we may be better able to gauge whether, from the financial and economic point of view, we are likely to gain or lose by its departure. This would need, of course, to be weighed against the political and strategic considerations involved in each case.*¹⁵

The committee convened from February to September 1957, when it produced its final report. On political developments in East Africa, especially Kenya, the report stated that the political pressures were those of an unstable multi-racial society. On the economic front, the cost to the Exchequer, via the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, was very limited. The main drain on Britain had been caused by the Mau Mau emergency, but the greater part of this had now been met.¹⁶ On the East African region as a whole, the report stated that the region was a "testing ground" for "multi-racial development;" the "balance between racial groups" was maintained "only by the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom;" without it, there would be political conflict, social disintegration, and economic bankruptcy.¹⁷ East Africa was identified as having great potential strategic importance. As such premature withdrawal would lead to a "disastrous decline in the prestige and influence of the United Kingdom," and would "bring to a shabby conclusion an important and hopeful experiment in race relations."¹⁸ The consequences would be dire as markets would be lost and the area would be vulnerable to subversive penetration from the Soviet Union. So, strategic consideration dictated a continuing British presence in East Africa.

On the whole, the Cabinet Colonial Policy Committee study concluded that the economic costs of Empire were evenly matched and the economic interests of the United Kingdom were unlikely in themselves to be decisive in determining whether or not a territory should become independent.¹⁹ Although damage could certainly be done by the premature grant of independence, the economic dangers to the United Kingdom of deferring the grant of independence for her own selfish interests after the country was politically and economically ripe for independence would be far greater than any dangers resulting from an act of independence negotiated in an atmosphere of goodwill such as has been the case with Ghana and Malaya.²⁰ Though the impact of "Macmillan's audit" was not immediate, it does appear that some aspects of the report did influence the post-1957 policy towards decolonisation.

As alluded to earlier on, that when the Federation of Central Africa was formed, part of its aim was to create a multiracial society, the British pursued this objective throughout 1957. The Federal authorities hoped to ameliorate minor African grievances, and the result would be to encourage the gradual growth of an African middle class willing to

enter the political system dominated by European settlers. In order to achieve this endeavour, particular importance and financial support was accorded education. For instance, in 1957, of the sixty-eight full-time students admitted at the University College in Salisbury (Harare), seven were African men, one African woman and one Asian.²¹ Meanwhile in the course of 1957, London announced that there would be a constitutional review for the Federal constitution in 1960. There were growing concerns among Africans that this constitutional review would complete the transfer of power into the settlers' hands. By the turn of 1958, the Colonial Office was continuing with carefully calculated constitutional reforms in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, designed to give limited African electorates a minority interest in the formulation of policy. At the same time, there were indications that the white settlers position in Southern Rhodesia was hardening. This was shown by the overthrow of the reformist Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Garfield Todd, by the United Federal Party in February 1958. It was now clear that the Europeans in the Federation would not approve the coming constitutional review acceptable to the UN, Commonwealth and Africans in the Federation.

d. Britain and Algeria, end of 1956 to March 1958

Now, with the preceding discussion of intense activity in Algeria throughout 1957, what was British reaction or response to the Algerian conflict? The "battle of Algiers" added to the growing internationalisation of the Algerian war especially in Britain. The British press reported the battle of Algiers extensively especially on French atrocities. For instance in March 1957 the British newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian* ran instalments on Henri Alleg's *La Question*. He was an Algiers based journalist who was arrested by Massu's men during the battle of Algiers. Alleg described how he was tortured by the paratroops and other victims corroborated his charges as they had experienced the same treatment.

In the House of Commons, the Labour Party MPs Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Konni Zilliacus and Fenner Brockway took the Government to task to explain its position on the abuse of human rights in Algeria by the French. For example, on 17 March 1958 Konni Zilliacus asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he would draw the policy of repression in Algeria to the notice of the Security Council under Article 34 of the Charter as a circumstance tending to cause friction between France and her Arab neighbours; and if he would put on the agenda of the UN General Assembly, under Article 10 of the Charter, the systematic violation of the French Army authorities in Algeria of Article 5 of the Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the General Assembly in 1948, which prohibited torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishments.²² On the same matter Fenner Brockway asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he would, under Article 24 of the 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, draw the attention of the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to the breach by the French military authorities in Algeria of Article 3 and 15, paragraph (2) of this Convention, prohibiting torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment even in times of war or public emergency, and request him to bring the matter to the notice of the European Commission on Human Rights.²³ The Government's response by Commander Allan

Noble, Minister of State, Foreign Affairs, was negative as he stated that it would be inappropriate for Her Majesty's Government to take the action requested by the questioners. He argued that the matter was for the French Government, who had shown their seriousness by appointing a Commission to investigate all allegations of torture in Algeria.²⁴ Once again the British position was one of hands-off on Algeria. On several occasions in 1957 when the Algerian question was before the United Nations, Britain always voted for or supported the position of France. Possibly, this was because like France, Britain thought she was in the same boat on colonial problems, so she had to support a fellow imperial power. Britain only voted in the affirmative on the compromise resolution of 10 December 1957. This was in no way a shift in the British position because she thought the resolution was mild and could not do much harm to France.

The French authorities had arrested and put on trial some of those who took part in the battle of Algiers. One of those arrested was a twenty-two year old Algerian woman Djamila Bouhired of the Air France terminal bomb. Her case was highly controversial and highly publicized. She was later condemned to death by a military tribunal whose decision was upheld by the court of appeal, also a special military tribunal. Djamila Bouhired's case exemplifies British Government position of non-interference in the Algerian conflict. The only people who intervened on her behalf in Britain were members of the public and seventy-two members of Parliament of the opposition Labour Party who wrote a letter to President Rene Coty of France on 5 February, 1958 to ask for her reprieve.²⁵ The French government did not take kindly to this as they perceived it as interference from outside on a matter that was within the competence of France.

The British government made every effort to discourage any attempt by British citizens to intervene on behalf of the convicted Algerian woman. The official British position was that such intervention would do more harm than good for the woman especially when a pardon came to be considered by the French authorities. Correspondence on Bouhired's case also shows attempts that were made by French Quai d'Orsay officials to have the British *Observer* correspondent Nora Beloff²⁶ expelled from Paris for her extensive and critical comments about the case, which were unpalatable to the French authorities. Up to this point, Britain, and British public opinion, was clearly worried about the escalation of the war in Algeria, but criticism was focussed on a side issue, the conduct of the security forces, with which Her Majesty's Government refused to concern itself. In 1958, however, French conduct of the war led to a major international incident, with which Her Majesty's Government itself was immediately concerned.

e. Sakiet Sidi Youssef and the Good Offices mission

The year 1958 opened with the bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef by the French. This incident was directly linked to the Algerian conflict and became a major international issue. It is to this crisis that this section of the thesis turns, making a detailed and critical analysis of this incident, which has not been treated at length by historians. The crisis pitted France against her Western allies namely Britain and America as they endeavoured to mediate through their "good offices." Following Suez in 1956, the bombing of the Tunisian border village of Sakiet Sidi Youssef on 8 February,

1958 was the second international crisis directly linked to the Algerian war of independence. The international uproar generated by this incident publicised the Algerian war. It led to a souring of relations between France and Tunisia, and motivated both Britain and America to attempt mediation between France and Tunisia through what was called the "good offices" mission. This section looks at the events leading to the bombing of this Tunisian border village, the international outcry that resulted out of this incident especially in France, Britain and America. The section will further look at how the good offices mission began, the progress it made and obstacles encountered, what conclusions came out of the mission and finally the record that the mission left for the course of the Algerian liberation struggle.

Before dwelling on this incident in great detail, a brief historical background is worth mentioning on why France had a large contingent of troops stationed in Tunisia. This is important because it was one of the major stumbling blocks for the resolution of the Franco-Tunisian dispute as a result of the Sakiet attack. When the French Protectorate was established in 1881 the Tunisians signed, under some restraint of course, the Treaty of Kassar Said of 12 May 1881.²⁷ This treaty entitled the French to maintain troops in Tunisia until both parties were agreed that the Tunisians could maintain order. Since the French imposed some restrictions on the number of troops that the Bey was to have, naturally this point of Tunisia being able to maintain law and order was never reached. The Conventions of 3 June 1955, by which France conceded internal autonomy to Tunisia, expressly left that treaty in force. The Declaration of 20 March 1956, however, by which the French conceded independence to the Tunisians, contemplated revision of both the Treaty of 1881 and the Conventions of 1955.²⁸ This was thought to be necessary because the two were incompatible with Tunisian's independence. Negotiations were envisaged for the possibility of new instruments to replace them. In particular a Treaty of Common Defence or Alliance was something contemplated or intended by both countries.²⁹ This was the nature of the state of affairs prevailing between France and Tunisia at the beginning of 1958.

The military successes of the French in Algeria had driven many guerrillas to seek sanctuary in Tunisia, where they had been prevented from reentering Algeria by the Morice line. They had, however, repeatedly tried to do so, and over the months leading to the beginning of 1958 there had been a considerable number of shooting incidents on the Tunisia-Algeria border. These reached a peak on 11 January 1958 when a small French detachment was ambushed by the FLN from over the Tunisian border, and fifteen French troops were killed.³⁰ On 29 January 1958, the French Cabinet agreed in principle that some sort of reprisal should be carried out against the FLN concentrations on the far side of the Tunisian border. Then on 7 February 1958, a French plane was shot at from the Tunisian village of Sakiet. The following day, the village was bombarded by the French Air Force but without the authorisation of Paris. The raid left seventy Tunisian civilians dead, twenty-five of them school-children,³¹ although the War Ministry in Paris tried to deny that children were among the casualties.

In France, reaction to this attack varied from condonation to condemnation. Defence Minister Chaban-Delmas expressed his satisfaction at this attack as an "act of legitimate

defence.”³² The army headquarters in Algiers published a communiqué stating that “no civilian objectives and Red Cross vans were damaged,”³³ but this report was later found wanting when weighed in the balance against eye-witness accounts of Swiss and Swedish Red Cross officials. A number of French Cabinet Ministers led by Foreign Minister Christian Pineau deplored the attack and favoured some sort of apologetic gesture by France. Their hopes were dashed on Tuesday 11 February 1958 when the Prime Minister Felix Gaillard addressed the National Assembly and defended the raid as an operation against a “purely military” objective and said that most of the victims were Algerian rebels.³⁴ His speech was ambiguous and confusing to say the least because he had also stated that the Government did not admit any culpability in the affair. After his speech, by 339 votes to 179 the French National Assembly adopted a motion regretting the civilian losses in Sakiet and expressing confidence in the Government.³⁵

In Tunisia, immediately after the attack President Bourguiba said that Tunisia would lodge a formal complaint with the United Nations. President Bourguiba then resorted to various diplomatic retaliatory measures against France. He summoned his Ambassador from Paris, and called for the evacuation of Tunisia, including Bizerta, by French troops of whom 20 000 were still in the country under the independence treaty.³⁶ The Tunisian authorities also confined the French troops to their barracks and cut off all outside food and water supplies for them. Tunisia further retaliated by closing French consulates in the country. Co-operation between French official experts and Tunisians was stopped. Meetings of Franco-Tunisian working groups dealing with problems of transfer of authority from France to Tunisia since its independence were cancelled.³⁷ On the whole Tunisia said the French air raid was an “act of particular gravity.... threatening international peace.”³⁸

With British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd away in Athens, R.A. Butler (Secretary of State for the Home Department and Lord Privy Seal) convened a cabinet meeting on 12 February 1958, at which the Tunisian incident and its international repercussions formed one of the main items on the agenda.³⁹ The same day Commander Allan Noble, Minister of State, Foreign Office, in a statement to the House of Commons expressed British government’s “grave concern” at the French raid on Sakiet.⁴⁰ He said that the Government deplored the loss of civilian lives and were discussing the situation with the French and Tunisian Governments, with both of whom they were in close and friendly relations. Commander Noble further said that the British Ambassadors in Paris and Tunis had been instructed to urge on the French and Tunisian Governments the need for moderation and restraint.⁴¹ Still in the House of Commons, Aneurin Bevan said the Labour Opposition shared the deep shock that the incident had caused to public opinion in France, where many Frenchmen of distinction had expressed their horror at what had happened.

The Opposition Labour Party took the matter further, when three of its members in parliament namely Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Mrs. Barbara Castle and Fenner Brockway on 12 February 1958 tabled a motion calling on the Government to ask for an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation which had developed out of the attack on Sakiet a threat to peace. The motion read thus:

That this House, being profoundly shocked by the bombing of Sakiet in Tunisia by French aircraft, with the loss of many lives, calls upon Her Majesty's Government (a) to make available, at once, such medical and other supplies as may be thought necessary by the Red Cross authorities on the spot; (b) to ask for an immediate meeting of the Security Council. ..(c) to instruct its permanent representative at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to raise with the Secretary General the question of the use by the French Government in Algeria on this occasion of aircraft and other equipment supplied to them by, through, and for NATO and (d) to take an immediate initiative to open negotiations designed to secure a just and peaceful settlement of the Algerian question in accordance with the United Nations resolution of December 10, 1957.⁴²

The motion was never debated. On the whole the British Government said that its aim was to help in restoring friendly relations between France and Tunisia. But the British Government was careful not to say anything that would offend or sour her relations with France. This was manifestly clear when the Sakiet incident was raised in the House of Lords by Lord Stansgate who asked Lord Gosford "whether bombers were supplied by America and whether they have been used in this way. Is there any form of restraint on them?"⁴³ P.G. Hancock of the Foreign Office issued a memorandum in which he advised Lord Gosford along the lines to take when responding.⁴⁴ The State Department in Washington had provided the British Embassy there with the details of the equipment used and under what terms they were provided for between France and United States and the limits of their use. Though the British Embassy in Washington had relayed this information to the Foreign Office, the bulk of which could have been used to address the question asked, this was suppressed. The only information was that given by the French themselves. In response to Lord Stansgate question Lord Gosford said:

I am afraid that the only information available is a statement made by M. Chaban-Delmas, the French Minister of Defence, at a press conference, that the eleven B26 bombers and six Corsair fighter-bombers of American manufacture used in the raid on Sakiet belonged outright to France by purchase and had not been assigned to her for use within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation⁴⁵

Some sections of the British media were outright in their condemnation of the French actions over Sakiet. In its lead story headlined "The Western Man's Burden," the *New Statesman* said that since the end of the Second World War

France had hung like a millstone round the neck of the West.⁴⁶ It stated that France's blind efforts to cling to the tattered relics of her empire have been a source of constant embarrassment and sometimes of grave danger to her anxious and weary Western friends. The paper called the Sakiet bombing "treacherous and brutal and there was no justification" for it. It argued that the bombing was a direct concern for the West as a whole. It called upon Britain and America to take stock of their dealings with France now, saying that for many years Britain and America had gone bail for France at the United Nations. For instance the December 1957 General Assembly resolution on Algeria refrained from outright condemnation of France and simply directed her to make peace largely because of British and American intervention. Now again the West's "protege" France has broken probation and the West must expect to share the guilt of the Sakiet attack.

The *New Statesman* further argued that Washington had herself to blame if Moscow accused her of complicity in the attack because the majority of the aircraft used were supplied by America under NATO. What made the matter worse was that the attack was launched less than a week after Washington had accorded France a further loan of \$650 million which both parties were fully aware would be used to prolong the Algerian war. The paper warned the West that she must not be surprised if the uncommitted nations turn their backs on the West and go East. The *New Statesman* advised that, while Britain and America must dissuade Bourguiba from any act which would deepen the crisis, they must support Tunisia's case at the United Nations. This Sakiet incident was according to the paper the opportunity for the West to prove to the world that right and wrong are more vital to them than the *amour-propre* of even an important ally. Tunisia being the only independent Arab state which has opted for the West of its own free will, was of great importance of itself, but more significant still as a test-case. The uncommitted world would want to know if the West was prepared to regard the ex-colonial nations as full members of the international community? Or does the West see them as merely second-class citizens whose sovereign rights could be freely ignored? The West would have to answer these questions before Asia and Africa concluded that friendship with the West paid no dividends, that even neutrality was dangerous, and that the best safeguard of their independence might be to have it underwritten by Moscow, concluded the *New Statesman*.

The Spectator was equally forthright in condemning the Sakiet attack and went further to offer some advice to Britain and America on how to deal with France and North Africa. According to *The Spectator*, the French reactions to the Sakiet blunder showed that the already existing lack of realism in their North African policy had now grown to a terrifying extent.⁴⁷ It argued that the attack had almost dashed the hope of associating North Africa in an alliance with Western Europe. France's allies in NATO now found themselves embroiled with the Afro-Asian block by a policy which was neither of their making, nor to their advantage. It argued that it would not be surprising if Britain and America were soon to decide that this had gone on long enough, and that there were limits to the allowances which could be made for the difficulties of the French in Algeria. The paper

urged both Britain and America to formulate some realistic policy of aid to those states which were still holding out against the pressures exercised from Moscow and Cairo. The West should support those countries who fear the extension of Egyptian influence; something more was required, if the whole of the Arab world and a substantial part of Africa was not to fall under Soviet influence.

For *The Spectator* the real threat to Western interest was the Cold War and the Sakiet incident might provide an opportunity for the East to penetrate other parts of world such as the Middle East and North Africa. So what the West was supposed to do was first to prevent the existence of legitimate Russian interests in these areas. The West must make discreet support for her remaining friends, whether Arab or not. Among the West's remaining friends was Bourguiba and it was here that French policy in North Africa had done so much damage already and would do more unless Britain and America intervened to cut the losses. Finally, the paper urged both Britain and America to show the French authorities that, if the Sakiet affair was debated in the United Nations, France would find itself alone.

Reacting to the Sakiet attack the *Washington Post* called it "an act of utter madness."⁴⁸ The State Department issued a statement on 9 February 1958, in which the United States Government stated that it was "profoundly disturbed" by reports of the French air raid on a Tunisian border village. "We are concerned at the effect this occurrence may have on the relations between two nations, both friends of the United States, who we continue to hope would find means of reconciling their differences in the interest of the peaceful progress of the North African area."⁴⁹ President Eisenhower, who was personally angered by this action, instructed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to call the French Ambassador Herve Alphand to his home and to personally express to him the Government's deep concern over the attack. The French Ambassador is said to have left after the meeting grey-faced.⁵⁰ The Americans warned France that they would vote against her if the matter was raised in the United Nations Security Council. At his press conference on 11 February 1958 when commenting on the French attack on Sakiet, Dulles said the United States deplored incidents like this which tended to reverse the trend towards co-operation between North Africa and Western Europe.⁵¹ The evident fear of the American Government was that the repercussions of this incident could only play into Russian hands, if Tunisia sought assistance from the Russians.

The Sakiet raid was shocking and embarrassing to both Britain and America because it was later discovered that the equipment used originated from the two Western Powers. Lord Gorford's statement in the House of Lords had been "economical with the truth." A British Embassy memorandum from Washington addressed to the African Department in the Foreign Office (London) revealed the origin of most of the equipment. The information was obtained first by the State Department from the French Embassy in Washington at the former's request. The State Department then passed the information to the British Embassy. According

to the information from the French the Bombers B-26's had been bought by the French Government from the surplus United States Air Force stock some two years ago.⁵² This had been strictly a commercial transaction and no restrictions had been placed on the use of the planes. In addition to the bombers, however, some half dozen "Corsair" fighter aircraft, of the type known officially as the F4U7, took part in the raid. These planes were received from the United States under the Military Assistance Programme.⁵³ In addition, the French admitted that some of the tracer bullets, the 1000-lb bombs 500lb bombs had also been provided under the Military Assistance Programme. They said, incidentally, that a number of 500lb and 250lb bombs dropped on Sakiet were of United Kingdom origin.⁵⁴

Since the Corsair aircraft and the bombs had been provided as grant aid under the Military Assistance Programme, they were subject to the provisions of the 1950 Bilateral Agreement between France and the United States, which dealt with Mutual Defence Assistance between the two countries. Article I (paragraph 2 and 3), of the Agreement defined the circumstances in which equipment could be used. It read as follows:

Each Government undertakes to make effective use of assistance received pursuant to paragraph I of this article;

- (a) For the purpose of promoting an integrated defence of the North Atlantic area and for facilitating the development of defence plans under articles 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty and
- (b) Neither Government without the prior consent of the other, will devote assistance furnished to it by the other Government to purposes other than those for which it was furnished.⁵⁵

Section 105 of the Mutual Security Act of 1954 (as amended) under which the United States Government is authorised to make deliveries under the Mutual Aid Programme also provides that equipment may be used "to maintain...internal security". It adds: "The President shall be satisfied that such equipment and materials will not be used to undertake any act of aggression against any nation."⁵⁶ France had consistently taken the line that Algeria, being part of metropolitan France, comes within the NATO area. So far as the obligations assumed by the French Government were concerned, however, the 1950 Agreement was the operative document. Whether the 1950 or 1954 Agreement was the operative one at the time of the raid, it was clear that the French did not abide by either Agreement. The State Department had never raised with the French Government the use which had been made of American aid equipment in Algeria. They felt, however, that the raid on Sakiet fell into a different category and therefore considered making a protest to the French Government and asking for an assurance that there would be no repetition.

In the House of Commons on 12 February 1958 Anthony Wedgwood Benn of the Labour Party asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what instructions had been given to the British delegate at NATO to take up the question of the use of American bombers, supplied under NATO, for this attack upon a third country which was not only a breach of the Charter but of Articles 1 and 7 of the NATO Agreement itself.⁵⁷ In response Commander Noble stated that the British representative at NATO had been instructed to emphasise the importance of a constructive effort to restore the situation. Britain did not want to take any stance that would either offend France or the United States at the NATO meeting.

Since the Sakiet incident created an international hullabaloo that was likely to draw the Arab world on one side and France on the other, both Britain and America acted quickly to stabilise the situation by offering intervention through their good offices. The exercise of good offices by the British Government began informally on 12 February 1958 when the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau told Sir Gladwyn Jebb, British Ambassador in Paris that he would be grateful if Her Majesty's Government could do anything to persuade President Bourguiba to relax the blockade of French forces in Tunisia.⁵⁸ On the same day the British Government made representations to the Tunisian Government, through their Ambassador in London Taleb Slim and also through Angus Malcolm, British Ambassador in Tunis, to the effect that the continued denial of essential provisions to the French forces in Tunisia would inevitably lead to a further crisis. President Bourguiba refused to lift the ban on food supplies but on February 15 he stated that he would reverse this decision if asked to do so by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarsjoeld.⁵⁹ The Secretary-General duly intervened on the same day and was given a favourable reply. But the Tunisians wanted an assurance that the French would not abuse the sending of foodstuffs and water and this assurance was granted.

Still on 15 February 1958 the French Government spokesman announced that the meeting of the Council of Ministers had decided on the possible compensation for the Tunisian civilian population.⁶⁰ The Government had decided to ask the French Red Cross to get in touch immediately with the Tunisian Red Crescent with a view to proceeding with the assessment of losses suffered by the civilian population only during the bombing. The same spokesman said that the French Government was determined to accept any good offices which are offered to them to mediate, but in no case would France accept an offer of arbitration.⁶¹ At the beginning both Britain and America thought it wise to wait for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to mediate if he wished to. But he informed them that he did not propose to take any broad initiative himself in the absence of a lead from Britain and America.⁶² As a result an agreement was reached between the British Government and the American Government to propose their good offices in Paris and Tunis. This was done on 16 February 1958. On the same day Sir Gladwyn Jebb expressed his worries about concerted Anglo-American action.⁶³

In a letter to the Foreign Office he cautioned against both Britain and America applying the stick on France. He said that it was better for the Americans to apply the stick while Britain had recourse to the carrot.⁶⁴

Jebb's fears were that if both applied the stick there was likely to be political unrest similar to the one in November 1957 that nearly brought down the Fourth Republic. So the Ambassador pressed for caution.

Meanwhile both Tunisia and France had accepted the British and American offer of good offices. The good offices offer in essence came to involve shuttle diplomacy between Paris, Tunis and London. The scope of the good offices was not precisely defined at this time, so its first task was to work out the modalities and issues to be tackled by the mission. The way the mission was to proceed was put by the Americans to British Ambassador in Washington Sir Harold Caccia on 17 February 1958.⁶⁵ Initial American thinking was that the United Kingdom and United States coordination of policy should be effected in Washington. But they began to turn over the idea and thought that the two countries, Britain and America could jointly agree on some neutral point, for example Rome, where they might seek to bring the French and Tunisians together.⁶⁶ If this happened, special representatives would have to be appointed by the four Governments, and these representatives would have to be given wide discretionary powers for them to be effective. Sir Harold Caccia expressed his doubts about the feasibility of these American suggestions. He said that while there might be some advantage in a neutral point, there looked to him to be serious operational difficulties. For instance there were already five places where action might have to be taken, that is, Washington, London, Paris, Tunis and New York.⁶⁷ To add a sixth would surely be complicating what was already difficult enough. Moreover, the issues at stake between British and American relations with France on the one hand and North Africa on the other were so great that it would not in practice be easy for any of the countries to give their representative any wide degree of discretion.

In response the Foreign Office shared most of Sir Harold's concerns. They stated that the position of the British Government was that they should begin by taking action in Paris and Tunis,⁶⁸ and that the British and American representations would always be closely coordinated but sometimes made separately. The Foreign Office stated that it had been advised by Sir Gladwyn that the French would be unlikely to agree at this stage to attend four power meetings or go to a neutral place.⁶⁹ It does appear that the British position was sympathetic to the French because to the French a neutral venue would have meant that there was a dispute between herself and Tunisia. Even in British government circles they had always wanted to treat the Sakiet attack as a situation not a dispute. The Foreign Office was also against the idea of special representatives at a neutral venue, arguing that for any progress to be made they had to speak to the principals,⁷⁰ that is Bourguiba and Gaillard, on a constant basis. Also the sixth centre of activity was unnecessary.

It appears that at this stage British proposals carried the day. It had been hoped that acceptance of the Anglo-American offer of mediation would lead to the adjournment of the debate on Franco-Tunisian problem in the United Nations Security Council due to begin on 18 February 1958. This was not to be the case. The meeting went ahead as scheduled, on its agenda was the Tunisian complaint against France for the Sakiet bombing, and the French counter-complaint about Tunisian aid to Algerian rebels.

Both countries did not object to the other's complaint when it was tabled. Britain and America were eager to keep the meeting procedural, and keep away from a debate on matters of substance. This was because any debate would have been embarrassing to both of them and would have been more likely to exacerbate than to improve Franco-Tunisian relations. The Council meeting was adjourned indefinitely to allow time for the exercise of the British and American good offices to compose the differences between the two countries. The British and American representatives Sir Pierson Dixon and Mr. Wadsworth informed the council that their Governments might have positive suggestions to offer the parties at the centre of the conflict.

On 19 February 1958 the State Department released the following statement to the press:

...The Secretary of State has designated Deputy Under-Secretary Robert Murphy to represent the United States in exercising this Government's good offices in conjunction with the Government of the United Kingdom in order to assist the Governments of France and Tunisia to settle the outstanding problems between them...As one of the two Powers which are extending their good offices, the United States hopes to be able to offer affirmative suggestions to advance the objective of a peaceful and equitable solution of the problems to be considered.⁷¹

Back to the House of Commons on 19 February 1958, Wedgwood Benn asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Selwyn Lloyd if he would undertake to look at the most difficult question of all, which was the continued presence in Tunisia of 20,000 French troops by virtue of the old Protectorate Treaty, but under no international agreement, which was one of the greatest causes of difficulty between the two countries.⁷² In response Lloyd stated that it was well known that there were a number of matters in dispute between the two Governments, that was why Britain had offered her good offices. On a related matter Paul Williams (Sunderland, South) asked Lloyd if he would agree that there was considerable sympathy in Britain with the role France was trying to carry out in North Africa.⁷³ Lloyd answered by saying that he was glad to acknowledge the special position of France in North Africa and the importance to this and to other countries of friendly relations between France and the people of North Africa.⁷⁴

On 20 February 1958 the Foreign Office spokesman said that Her Majesty's Government regarded their offer of good offices as applying to the whole range of questions directly at issue between the French and Tunisian Governments. On the same day Harold Beeley, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office was appointed to represent the British Government in the exercise of the good offices. On 22 February 1958, Robert Murphy arrived in London and had the first meeting with Beeley.⁷⁵ The following day he met Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and the Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd. After these consultations it was agreed that Murphy must go alone to Paris and Tunis. The British Government recalled its Ambassadors in Paris and Tunis, Gladwyn Jebb and

Angus Malcolm respectively, to London to report on the latest developments and for consultations on the good offices attempts.

In its editorial comment on 22 February 1958, the *Daily Telegraph* had a message of warning for the Anglo-American good offices mission. The paper warned against the perception in some quarters that France's acceptance of the Anglo-American good offices might be the thin end of the wedge which in time would prise open the door to an international settlement of North African problem.⁷⁶ It also questioned the basis for the argument that Sakiet might have made possible some compromise solution for the Algerian war. The above assumptions, the paper argued, were unfounded and, if acted upon by the American and British Governments, could produce ills in Europe far graver than any it might cure in North Africa. The article further stated that Western Governments seeking to help must just accept, as the starting point of their good offices, that any insistence on putting Algeria on their agenda would subvert the Fourth Republic.

The *Daily Telegraph* went further and warned both the British and American administrations that it would be a great error on their part if they drew any false parallels between the success of outside intervention in ending the Indo-China war and the opportunities that existed at the moment in North Africa. According to the paper the situation in Algeria was quite different because the French army was not defeated as it was in Dien Bien Phu. Any withdrawal in Algeria, therefore, must be voluntary and be based on the free agreement of the French which was lacking at the moment. So only an internal *coup d'etat* which could overthrow the Fourth Republic or Anglo-American pressure might succeed in imposing a settlement in Algeria, but at a heavy price. This would be the collapse of France as a member of the Western alliance. The paper then appealed to both Murphy and Beeley to limit their objectives strictly to the letter of their terms of reference. It concluded by warning that any attempt to use the French Government's present embarrassment over Sakiet as an excuse to push them into an over-all settlement would be to give way to a lethal temptation.

Murphy had his first meeting with Gaillard and Pineau on 24 February 1958. It was during these exploratory talks undertaken by Murphy in Paris and Tunis that serious differences began to emerge between France and Tunisia. The French Government wanted the talks to be limited in scope, namely to three points: First, restoring freedom of movement for French troops and settling the questions of the five closed consulates and the security of French settlers; second, Algerian frontier control; third, helping towards a resumption of direct Franco-Tunisian negotiations on more fundamental matters such as the long term future of Bizerta.⁷⁷ The Algerian problem was to be excluded, a point that was clearly taken note of by London and Washington. Murphy saw President Bourguiba in Tunis on 25 February 1958. In their meeting President Bourguiba stated that acceptance by the French Government of the principle of total evacuation of their troops was a prerequisite for a settlement.⁷⁸ Bourguiba further said that he hoped that in the "good offices" discussion a solution would be found to the Algerian problem. This clearly showed that there were contrasting views between France and Tunisia. At the same meeting with Murphy, Bourguiba stated that he would

agree to neutral observers on the airfields, but rejected the idea of a frontier commission under a neutral chairman, on the ground that this would involve Tunisian cooperation with France against the Algerian rebellion.⁷⁹

After these exploratory consultations Murphy had to report to Dulles. In a letter to the Foreign Office, and stamped strictly confidential and to be distributed in Whitehall, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, who had been given the information by his American colleague Amory Houghton, gave a summary of Murphy's report to Dulles.⁸⁰ Murphy had concluded that France had no case for retaining her troops in Tunisia, and consequently recommended that the French Government should forthwith agree in principle to withdraw all French troops in Tunisia with the exception of those in Bizerta,⁸¹ and then to do so within a reasonable period of time. On the Tunisian side, Bourguiba should agree to allow neutral observers to be stationed on the military airfields so as to prevent the utilization of the latter by the FLN and, in addition, acquiesce in some international regime of inspection on the border.⁸²

Murphy met Premier Gaillard in Paris on 3 March 1958 at which he presented to him his proposals. The French produced their counter proposals. Murphy then returned to London on the same day. After consultations with Beeley, the two "good officers" left for Paris where they met Gaillard on March 5. At this meeting Murphy and Beeley presented a five-point plan to Gaillard for solving the Franco-Tunisian deadlock. So, as a way out of the deadlock and as a future resumption of Franco-Tunisian talks on the long-term future of Bizerta the British and American good offices representatives proposed the following: Immediate withdrawal of all French forces in Tunisia to the Bizerta region, a token evacuation of French forces from Tunisia, cancellation of measures taken against French civilians; neutral supervision of military airfields at present under French control to ensure that they were not used by Algerian rebels and finally a neutral commission to supervise the Algerian frontier.⁸³ Beeley was quick to emphasise that Her Majesty's Government fully associated themselves with this approach to the problem. In response Gaillard conceded that the presence of French troops outside Bizerta and the airfields was not intrinsically important, and did not dispute the "good offices" argument that control of the airfields be assured by neutral observers. Gaillard concluded by saying that he would have to consult his colleagues.

The question of supervision of the Algerian frontier was of direct concern to Britain. The concern was economic. Britain was obtaining iron ore from the Ouenza mines 15 miles west of the Algeria-Tunisia border.⁸⁴ The mines were in the wooded mountain region 130 miles south of the port of Bone. Output from the Ouenza mines in 1955 totalled 2,683 000 tons, of which 1,693 000 tons went to Britain. Algerian rebel activity and sabotage in 1956 reduced output to 1,695 000 tons, of which Britain took 1,057 000 tons. In 1957 the output rose to 1,966 000 tons, of which 1,213 000 tons went to Britain. The Algerian rebels were now hampering deliveries by sabotage in the mining region and by attacks on the railroad. It was for these reasons that Britain had other interests in border control.

Gaillard informed the good offices team about the French Government's final views on

the proposals on 10 March 1958. He said that France would be prepared to withdraw from Tunisia all their forces outside Bizerta in return for the reversal of Tunisian measures against French civilians, the re-opening of the consulates, freedom of movement for the troops, the restoration of normal diplomatic relations, neutral control of the airfields and of the frontier and bilateral negotiations for a provisional agreement on Bizerta, pending its inclusion in a multilateral defence arrangement.⁸⁵ Robert Murphy and Harold Beeley then flew to Tunis to meet President Bourguiba on 11 March 1958. In meetings with Bourguiba and his senior officials very little progress was made by the good offices mission. The French conditions were unacceptable to the Tunisians. The issue of Bizerta proved to be the main sticking point. President Bourguiba insisted that he could not enter into any conversations about the future of Bizerta until the French had agreed in principle to the total evacuation of all their forces from Tunisia.

The good offices mission was now in a stalemate and there was the danger of a breakdown of the talks. As a way out of the imminent impasse the "good officers" decided to draft a document for establishing a basis for agreement and on which the approval of the Tunisian and French Governments would be sought. The drafting of the document was to try as far as possible to bring the Tunisians in the direction of the French Government's requirements.⁸⁶ This document was presented to, and approved by the Tunisian Government on 15 March 1958. In brief, the salient features of the document were as follows; measures were to be taken for neutral observers to have access to the military airfields which would be evacuated by the French forces; all French military personnel outside the Bizerta perimeter would be withdrawn from Tunisia as soon as possible; when normal relations had been re-established, the Tunisian Government would study sympathetically, within the framework of a consular convention, such requests as the French Government might make for the opening of additional consulates; pending the gradual normalisation of relations between the two countries, each of the two Governments would continue to make every effort to protect and safeguard the nationals of the other country residing in its territory.⁸⁷ In the second phase the document stated that it was understood that the French Government did not dispute the sovereignty of Tunisia over Bizerta, and that a provisional regime for this base would be defined by mutual agreement between the two Governments.⁸⁸ Finally, during these conversations the Good Offices of the Governments of Great Britain and of the United States would continue to be available to the French and Tunisian Governments.

The text of the proposals by Murphy and Beeley were presented to Gaillard on 19 March 1958. The aim was to get the agreement of the French Government to the proposals. Premier Gaillard and Foreign Minister Pineau took strong exception to the absence of any provision for frontier control on the proposals. Gaillard undertook to consult his Cabinet colleagues, but already since his Government was a coalition his position was made difficult by the leakage of the proposals. The Independent Party in his Government was already agitating against the withdrawal of French forces from the Tunisian airfields.⁸⁹ From now on the Independents would be a thorn in Gaillard's side when dealing with the good offices mission. The French Council of Ministers met on 21 March 1958. At this meeting Gaillard successfully resisted the pressure of the

Independent ministers to reject the proposal for withdrawal from the airfields and the stationing there of neutral observers. The concession he made to the Independents was that the Government would take a firm stand on the principle of Tunisian non-interference in Algeria.⁹⁰ Murphy and Beeley met Gaillard and Pineau again on 25 March 1958. French and Tunisian Governments. At this meeting the French made the counter-proposal that they would be ready to implement the March 15 proposals if the establishment of some kind of neutral system on the frontier had been agreed in principle.

Murphy and Beeley decided that rather than taking this French counter-proposal to Tunis immediately, they could convey it to President Bourguiba through their respective Ambassadors in Tunis, Lewis Jones and Angus Malcolm. President Bourguiba's reception to the French counter-proposal was negative and said that he even did not want to discuss it with the good offices representatives. At a March 27 meeting between Gaillard and Pineau and the Anglo-American representatives it was agreed that rather than any further move on the part of the mission, the "good officers" should discuss the situation with the United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold who was at that time on his way from Moscow to London.⁹¹ The Anglo-American representatives wanted to enquire from the Secretary-General if there was any possibility of his intervening to facilitate the establishment of a system of neutral investigation on the Algeria-Tunisia frontier. Murphy and Beeley met Hammarskjold in London on 30 March, 1958.⁹² The "good officers" gave him an account of their work. In response Hammarskjold told them that he would consider it within his powers to establish a neutral system of investigation on the frontier without a resolution of the Security Council or the General Assembly. But he added that if he was to act on his own authority he must be requested to do so by both parties. In the end the Secretary-General authorised the good offices men to repeat to the Tunisians, that a neutral system of investigation of incidents on the frontier was a reasonable proposal and one in which he would be prepared to cooperate.

In its editorial comment of 5 April 1958, the *Daily Telegraph* expressed some guarded optimism about the settlement in the Franco-Tunisian dispute. According to the paper this was because of the new factor which was the active interest now shown by the Secretary-General of the United Nations by meeting the Anglo-American good offices representatives.⁹³ The *Telegraph* said that the Franco-Tunisian dispute was indeed almost a text-book case for United Nations intervention.⁹⁴ It argued that peace was manifestly endangered as long as France believed that Tunisia was helping the Algerian rebels and Tunisia accused France of trespassing on her sovereignty. The issue was, moreover, one in which the United Nations should be able to afford the practical safeguards required by France without the offence to Tunisian pride which would be caused if the French enforced them themselves. So, according to the *Telegraph*, only the United Nations could provide a mutually acceptable way out of the dilemma, affording France the safeguards she rightly required, but without affront to Tunisia.⁹⁵

After their meeting with the Secretary-General the good offices agents met President Bourguiba in Tunis on 4 April, 1958. President Bourguiba maintained his refusal to

cooperate voluntarily in any measures designed to help the French to police the frontier between Tunisia and Algeria. He further said that he would accept a decision by the Security Council, but warned that if the matter returned to the Security Council the Tunisian Delegate would be instructed to reopen the question of Bizerta and would also raise the Algerian question. This Tunis meeting was a failure because President Bourguiba and his advisors were uncompromising on the question of border control. The disappointment was expressed by Harold Beeley when he said to reporters "I do not believe there is a definitive check to the talks. No agreement has been reached and this could be called a temporary setback."⁹⁶

The Anglo-American officers returned to Paris during the Easter holiday, and had a meeting with Gaillard and Pineau at Barbezieux in south-western France on 9 April 1958.⁹⁷ Murphy and Beeley gave an account of their talks in Tunis. They discussed with the French the various ways of getting out of the impasse to which the good offices had come. One of the ways which came as a suggestion from Sir Gladwyn Jebb to the "good officers" and the French was to the effect that the French Government should accept the proposals of 15 March 1958 unconditionally, while at the same time reserving their right to refer the frontier question to the Security Council.⁹⁸ Once this was said, Gaillard then put two questions to the meeting: In the event of a debate in the Security Council would the United Kingdom and United States Governments support France (a) in asking for frontier control and (b) in resisting attempts to put the Algerian question as such on the Agenda.⁹⁹ The meeting concluded with Gaillard saying he would call a Cabinet Meeting on Friday 11 April, 1958 and expressed his wish to have answers to the above questions before then.

Through Ambassador Jebb the British Government informed Pineau on April 11 that they were most anxious to avoid the Franco-Tunisian issue going back to the Security Council in a spirit of recrimination. But if a debate became inevitable they would support the French Government in pressing for some form of frontier control and in opposing the inscription of the Algerian question as such on the Agenda on the ground that it was ruled out by Article II (7) of the Charter.¹⁰⁰ However, the British added that they hoped that the French Government would appreciate that there might be other aspects of the Franco-Tunisian dispute on which the views of Britain and France might differ. On the same day President Eisenhower sent a private, but strongly worded letter to Gaillard.¹⁰¹ In the letter the President emphasised the importance attached by the United States Government to the acceptance by the French Government of the *modus vivendi* defined in the proposals of March 15. The Eisenhower letter went further and warned that refusal by France to abide by these proposals would force the United States to withdraw all diplomatic support from France.¹⁰² This letter seems to have caused panic within the French Government and that day's Cabinet meeting was postponed to the following day.

On 12 April 1958 A. Houghton and R. Murphy informed Louis Joxe, Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry of France that the United States favoured in principle the idea of neutral frontier control in circumstances such as those existing on the border between Algeria and Tunisia, and that, although they could not give a definite commitment, they

would presumably support a resolution to this effect in the Security Council. The answer to the question on Algeria was not given. Like the British, they did not recommend recourse to the Security Council. The French Cabinet met on the morning of the same day and it was one of the longest cabinet meetings, taking almost eleven hours to come to a conclusion.¹⁰³ The meeting was very heated and only the personal intervention of President Rene Coty stopped the five Right wing Independent Ministers from resigning, which could have led to the collapse of the Government. At the end a communiqué was issued which stated that: "The Cabinet has agreed to accept as a basis for the discussion with Tunisia the results of the contacts made by Murphy and Beeley," the American and British good offices commission.¹⁰⁴ The French also reserved their right to raise problems concerning the control of the frontier before international bodies.

The State Department in Washington immediately issued the following statement:

*that it was "much encouraged" by the French Cabinet's decision to accept the findings of the Anglo-American good offices mission as a basis for talks with Tunisia.*¹⁰⁵

Though the French Cabinet decision was to the United States liking, the fact that President Eisenhower had sent a message to Gaillard before the meeting raised a storm of protest in Paris. The French complained of "Anglo-American pressure" on France. The British Embassy had to state that no pressure had been exerted by Britain on France during the talks which took place within the framework of the good offices mission.

The April 12, French Cabinet meeting conclusions meant that they had to be approved or endorsed by the National Assembly. So it was decided that Parliament would be recalled on 15 April 1958. The decision to recall Parliament was primarily the idea of the Independent Ministers. At the request of the French Government it was agreed by the four parties in the negotiations that the document of March 15 should remain secret until after the French National Assembly had met. It was hoped that in the National Assembly debate Gaillard would only summarise the contents of the document. Unfortunately the document was immediately leaked, but what did not become publicly known was the fact that the March 15 proposals were embodied now in a document which had been approved by both the Tunisian and French Governments. At this time there was some ray of optimism in all the parties that the prospect of Franco-Tunisian conversation was possible.

The editorial comment of the *Daily Telegraph* of 14 April 1958 could sense something ominous coming for the French Government in the National Assembly debate the following day. The newspaper comment attempted to identify what the real issues were in the Franco-Tunisian dispute, the way out of the obstacles and what the National Assembly debate would mean. The article stated that if Gaillard survived in the Assembly, that would not be salvation but a precarious respite to go on with a task that remained as difficult as ever. The paper argued that agreement could be achieved by either of the following; further Tunisian concession, of which there was no sign at the moment, or further yielding by France, which would split and destroy the Government.¹⁰⁶

The paper, rhetorically asked, could international action offer a way out? On this approach there was also a deadlock. France would not tolerate international interference in her handling of what she perceived to be a domestic revolt in Algeria. Conversely, Tunisia regarded Algeria as an enslaved Arab nation, and would accept international negotiation only if it was directed towards eventual Algerian independence. These fundamental divergences, the paper argued, had restricted the scope of the Anglo-American good offices mission and bedevilled the prospect of any sort of international patrol or observation of the Tunisian-Algerian frontier. The paper suggested the way out of this impasse was that, since France's main concern was to prevent border infiltration, she should not insist on reciprocity.¹⁰⁷ In other words the observer teams could still do an effective job even if they were deployed on one side of the border, that is, the Algerian side.

As planned the French National Assembly met on 15 April 1958. The debate culminated in a vote of no confidence on the Gaillard Government by a vote of 321 to 255.¹⁰⁸ This meant the collapse of the Gaillard regime and of the Fourth Republic. The parliamentary debate was said to have been dominated by anti-American and to a lesser extent anti-British feeling. This was confirmed by Gaillard when he made his last speech to the Assembly. He said the debate was dominated by "xenophobia towards certain countries which have often been our allies and helpers, and sometimes our saviours. I must say that for the dignity of France. They have often helped us in difficult debates at the United Nations over Algeria."¹⁰⁹ To the Right-Wing Independents whose vote led to the downfall of the Government, Gaillard had this say:

*You condemn and mistrust the good offices mission. It is always a sign of weakness to look abroad for the causes of one's own troubles.*¹¹⁰

Earlier on in the National Assembly debate one of the right-wing leaders, the former Governor-General of Algeria and erstwhile liberal Jacques Soustelle, had made a ferocious onslaught on the United States by saying:

*We are allies when they need us in Europe, yet when it comes to the Middle East or North Africa they ignore us. It is well known that the State Department is prepared to sacrifice everything, including its oldest and strongest friends, in the hope of acquiring the friendship, or least the tolerance of the Arabs.*¹¹¹

Gaillard's last appeal was to ask Murphy and Beeley on 16 April, 1958 that they should ask President Bourguiba to ensure that during the interregnum in France nothing should be done to close the door to the restoration of satisfactory relations after the formation of a new French Government.

The editorial comment of the *Daily Telegraph* of 17 April 1958 headlined "The More it Changes..." criticised the way time and time again French Governments are brought down over particular policies which the next Government had proceeded to adopt and got away with. It called the ousting of the Gaillard Government an "indecent mating"

between the Communists and the extreme Right.¹¹² The paper expressed the wish that all hope must not be lost of chances of a negotiated settlement in Tunisia. The *Telegraph* article argued that the criticism of the Anglo-American terms totally lacked conviction. There was no alternative proposals submitted by those opposed to the Anglo-American ones, except the hysterical Poujadist policy of withdrawing France from NATO and reconquering Tunisia.¹¹³ The article concluded by a word of warning to the next French Government that if it was not willing to negotiate along the lines agreed by the Anglo-American intermediaries, there was a real danger of an explosion in Tunisia. This could be triggered by an attack on the French troops there and would have serious consequences in France.

On 19 April 1958 the American ambassador Amory Houghton was summoned by the acting French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau to his office to explain American press reports and news agencies that "an authorised source" had said that the United States now favoured France negotiating a settlement with the rebels in Algeria.¹¹⁴ It was alleged that the same source had said that the United States no longer felt Algeria was an entirely French matter but an international issue. All eyes now turned on Murphy who was suspected to be behind these statements. What is certain is that on 16 April 1958 Murphy had a secret press conference with selected American correspondents in Paris. This off-the-record private press conference once again raised an angry cry of American interference in French affairs. In Washington after a meeting between the acting Secretary of State Christian Herter and French Ambassador Herve Alphand, the State Department issued a statement. In it they stated that American policy on Algeria had not changed. The United States hoped that France herself would find a solution to the Algerian problem.¹¹⁵ The State Department concluded by saying that reports that the United States favoured direct talks between the French and Algerian rebels to end the hostilities were "without foundation."¹¹⁶ Whatever the United States denial, what is clear and certain is that from there onwards there was a shift in American policy in dealing with the Algerian war.

f. The revolution of May 1958

Political wranglings and instability within the Fourth Republic finally led to its collapse in May 1958. This created a political vacuum both in France and Algeria. The ensuing turmoil provided the opportunity for General Charles de Gaulle to present himself as the panacea of the political troubles that had resulted. The death-blow to the Fourth Republic began in late April 1958 when the liberal politician Pierre Pflimlin was mandated by the President of the Republic to form a new government. In both France and Algeria those in the right were from the outset opposed to his government on the grounds that it was moderate and that he favoured a negotiated settlement for Algeria. According to the *New York Times* most right-wing French called him the "notorious liquidator" of overseas possessions.¹¹⁷ The government that he contrived to form in May lasted no more than a fortnight before the coup which brought De Gaulle back to power. It is this crisis, the French empire and the Algerian problem that the next chapter discusses.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it could be seen that after Suez, beginning with the battle of Algiers the Algerian war not only became a French colonial problem but an international one. What the battle of Algiers signifies is that it did bring the war to the doorsteps of both the British and French public. Whereas the FLN suffered militarily, its regrouping in Tunisia and Morocco did provide a new lease of life to the movement and it gradually came to be the recognised internationally. The Sakiet Sidi Youssef incident truly internationalised the Algerian conflict. After the incident and the Anglo-American attempts at mediation, the course of the war changed and both Britain and America never thought the same of the conflict from then onwards.

The work of the Good Offices mission nevertheless survived. Though in a March 1958 meeting with British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, de Gaulle had expressed his misgivings about the "good offices" mission by saying that;

*he was against the good offices mission in principle...as they were something very near foreign interference in French affairs and their activities could only make the whole thing more difficult.*¹¹⁸

he had accepted the results of the mission within a few weeks of coming to power.

Quite often, a great deal of emphasis is made about the "smooth" coordination of the mission by Britain and America, but in reality this was not the case. Whereas America was forthright in criticising French actions during the raid and refusing to recognise France's special position in North Africa, Britain pursued a much more conciliatory tone. Britain cautioned the United States against heavy criticism of France, as this might eventually alienate French public opinion. London also urged Washington not to insist that the Sakiet raid was directly linked to the Algerian conflict.

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CHAPTER 6

DE GAULLE AND ALGERIA, MAY 1958 TO JANUARY 1960

a. The coming to power of de Gaulle

Events reached crisis point in both Paris and Algiers on 13 May 1958. A few days before this date the French executed three FLN fighters convicted of terrorism. In reprisal the FLN also killed three French prisoners in their custody. This was unpalatable to the Europeans settlers in Algeria and greatly infuriated them. On May 13, a huge crowd of colons descended on government buildings in Algiers. There, they proclaimed a "Committee of Public Safety" with General Massu as its head. He usurped all civil and military powers. He also demanded the resignation of the newly installed Government of Pflimlin. Salan the Commander-in-Chief also demanded the formation of a government of Public Safety in Paris and suggested that it be led by General Charles de Gaulle. Massu's actions were in essence a *coup d'état* directed against Paris. As with all other previous Governments of coalitions, the Pflimlin regime could not cope with the tide of events in Algiers and Paris and it fell. As the May events unfolded R.Lacoste (Minister for Algeria) forecast in gloomy terms a "diplomatic Dien Bien Phu."¹

With Pflimlin gone, all eyes turned to General de Gaulle, the Second World War hero, leader of wartime Free French who enjoyed the respect of the army as it considered him one of its own, who could not betray it. According to David Reynolds, de Gaulle had been preparing the ground for his recall and he cannily represented himself as the alternative to both political paralysis and a military coup.² de Gaulle accepted President Rene Coty's request to form a new government. De Gaulle was invested as Premier by the National Assembly (329 to 224) on 1 June 1958.³ It is important to note that de Gaulle had accepted the invitation to form the new government after attaching strings to the request. He obtained the power to rule by decree for six months, and within that period he was given the right to prepare, and submit to popular approval through a referendum, constitutional changes which would give France a strong executive and put an end to "government by parliament."⁴ The national plebiscite was held on 26 to 28 September 1958. It was held not only in Metropolitan France but in Algeria, and throughout the French Union, and was overwhelmingly in favour.

b. De Gaulle and the French empire, May 1958 to January 1960

As mentioned earlier, France's relationship with her colonies under the Fourth Republic was known as the French Union. This was to change under the Fifth Republic, the alliance now came to be known as the French Community. The socialist Government of Guy Mollet that came to power in early 1956 granted independence to Morocco and Tunisia in March of that year. Concerned about future repercussions of this development the Mollet regime decided to grant the remaining colonies greater autonomy. The outcome was the Defferre law, named after the Minister for Overseas France, Gaston Defferre.⁵ The new *loi-cadre* that came into effect in April 1957 had the following crucial aspects. It confirmed the November 1955 decree which had extended suffrage to

all French citizens throughout the empire except Algeria. As a consequence of this, since most of these colonies had small numbers of white settlers, the latter lost their influential position. The *loi-cadre* also granted the local assemblies increased powers to debate and vote on territorial budgets and administrative matters without having to seek the consent of the French High Commissioners.⁶ Lastly, the Defferre law increased the powers of government councils elected by territorial assemblies.⁷ No doubt, by 1957 some of the Africans in the French "associated territories" enjoyed more rights than in other European colonies including those of Britain. This does not in anyway imply that France wanted to give these territories independence, limited autonomy was enough. The shine over the French dependencies was in any case eclipsed by the British decision to grant Ghana full independence in 1957. This was the state of affairs prevailing in the relationship between France and her colonies in May 1958 when the Algerian problem precipitated the coming back to power of General Charles de Gaulle.

When de Gaulle came back to power a lot changed in the colonies. Though his plan was for the preservation of the different statuses of overseas *departements*, territories and associated states, he severely truncated these dependencies powers in assemblies and government councils. In other words, what was given in 1956 was taken away in 1958. The French Union was now replaced by the French Community, but France still maintained her dominant role in this new grouping. Under this new arrangement France was still to continue to control foreign affairs, defence, currency, economic and financial policy, justice, higher education, overseas transport and telecommunications of the "Community."⁸ Furthermore, it was stated that each colony would be given the opportunity to vote in a referendum on its future status, that is, whether to remain a territory, be fully integrated into the French Republic as a *departement*, or go its own way as an independent state with or without association with France. De Gaulle himself preferred the association route. But, there was a trap laid down for the colonies, if a colony voted to separate from France, it would lose French financial and technical assistance. This was an enticement for the small and poor overseas territories to retain some form of association with France.

Between 20-29 August 1958 de Gaulle visited Madagascar and Africa where he spoke of the upcoming referendum, and also defined the future policy of the Fifth Republic toward Africa after being prompted or urged to do so by African nationalists and the crowds he addressed. On 24 August 1958 in Brazzaville, he declared : "Whoever desires independence may have it immediately."⁹ A "No" vote in the referendum meant secession, but he assured his audience that independence was not irrevocably surrendered in the event of a "Yes" vote. He went further and stated that if some territory within the Community should in the long run, at the end of a specified time whose end shall not be stipulated, felt capable of exercising all the duties and obligations of independence, then it may decide through its elected assembly, and if necessary, through a referendum of its population, to become independent.¹⁰ After which, the Community would record its decision, and an agreement would regulate the conditions of transfer between the territory assuming its independence and following its own path, and the Community itself.

However, despite this French canvassing and manoeuvres to influence the referendum

vote, there were some brave leaders in the colonies such as the trade unionist Sekou Touré of Guinea who seemed unfazed by this French blackmail. The referendum was held on 28 September 1958 in French Africa, as far as Djibouti and the Comoros. Most leaders in these French dependencies campaigned for the "Yes" vote, that is, to continue some affiliation with France in exchange for aid. Only Sekou Touré campaigned for the "No" vote, demanding complete independence or separation from France. Touré is told de Gaulle to his face that "we prefer poverty in liberty to riches in slavery."¹¹ Touré succeeded in his mission and Guinea vote "No." The country was granted independence in October 1958. This, however, was granted with a vengeance by the French. The French are said to have removed everything as they left, even telephones were ripped off the walls.¹² De Gaulle repeated his threat of cutting aid to Guinea.

Those territories that voted for affiliation with France celebrated the birth of the Community in Paris on 14 July 1959. De Gaulle gave each new head of state a French tricolour. Article 86 of the Community's constitution stipulated that a member of the grouping could become independent, but ceased then to belong to the Community. The celebrations were shortlived as events soon revealed. In September 1959 after de Gaulle's self-determination speech on Algeria, the African heads of the Community's government asked de Gaulle to give them complete authority, as permitted under the constitution. Now, ideas of an Algerian settlement came to be linked to the whole question of the French presence in Africa. In December 1959 General de Gaulle visited West Africa and delivered a speech in Mali on the future of that territory, other members of the Mali Federation and the French Community as a whole, saying that he would support and aid them in their endeavour for independence, which de Gaulle himself preferred to call "international sovereignty."¹³

Between June 1958 and the end of the year General de Gaulle paid five visits to Algeria. He used these visits to set out his policy in a series of characteristically lofty speeches and to establish personal contact with all shades of opinion, official and unofficial, European and Muslim, and with junior as well as senior officers of the Army. The broad outlines of his policy for Algeria were stated in his very first speech in Algiers to an enthusiastic crowd of Europeans, the Army and Muslims, de Gaulle raised his arms in a V sign and exclaimed, "I have understood you."¹⁴ Then he went on to praise the army for its discipline and dedication in serving France. To the Muslims, he told them that from now onwards they were Frenchmen in the true sense of the word. In short, his policy for Algeria could be summarised as the attempt at a political solution by trying to win the nationalists back into the political arena by encouraging the candidacy of non-militants at the elections and so as to achieve peace. Simultaneously in the long term his Algerian policy was to press ahead with a great programme of economic and social reform based on the plans for capital development elaborated in a series of official studies since 1955.¹⁵ To the settlers, army and Muslims alike the de Gaulle of June 1958 seemed the perfect man to address their various needs, but how mistaken they were.

c. De Gaulle and Algeria, May 1958 to January 1960

In the referendum of 26-28 September, in Algeria 79.7 per cent of registered electors

voted, and 96.5 per cent of them voted "Yes."¹⁶ This was in contrast to the vote in France where 22 million voted and 4.5 million were the "No" vote.¹⁷ This referendum as stated earlier also covered French Black Africa. What is also of significance to this referendum was that for the first time Muslim women had the franchise. Meanwhile, to counter some of de Gaulle's initiatives the FLN announced the formation of a Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) or Government-in-Exile on 19 September 1958 in Cairo. The GPRA established itself in Tunis and was headed by Ferhat Abbas whose statesmanship and moderation was renowned abroad. The GPRA was immediately recognised by more than a dozen states, which included the Arab States of the United Arab Republic (URA), Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia and Morocco. Britain and America did not recognise the new regime. France declared that recognition of the government-in-exile by any foreign state would be considered an "unfriendly" act.¹⁸ The creation of the GPRA was by far the best ever attempt by the FLN to create a broadly based leadership, taking into account regional, ethnic and educational diversity in the movement.

The September 1958 referendum gave birth to what came to be known as the Fifth Republic in France. It was officially established on 6 October 1958. It shifted the balance of governmental power in favour of the executive. There was now a strong Presidency and a weak legislature with the President nominating the Prime Minister, dissolving Parliament, and having power to rule by decree and appeal to the electorate through referenda. The President was to seek a fresh mandate after every seven years. More importantly, the Fifth Republic and its constitution now meant the end of France's post-1945 political instability.

Following his success in the Referendum on his fourth visit to Algeria on 3 October 1958, de Gaulle made one of his famous speeches at the city of Constantine on future economic, political and social development of Algeria. This was to be a five year root-and-branch programme that was to bring economic, social and political benefits to the Algerians. De Gaulle guaranteed the Muslims a statutory majority whereby Muslim deputies elected to the National Assembly in Paris should outnumber the Europeans by two to one. He further guaranteed to the Algerians ten per cent of the places in the military and civil services of the French State. In essence the salient features of the Constantine plan were that in five years France would have redistributed 250,000 hectares of state lands to the Arabs, built 200,000 new houses for Moslems, created 400,000 new jobs. Wages were to be improved to be in line or par with those of metropolitan France, while a massive programme of education expansion was announced in which two-thirds of Muslim children would have access to schooling.¹⁹ In Raymond Bett's words the Constantine Plan was a modernisation plan of previously unimaginable proportions, which in two years led to impressive works projects, public housing and pipeline construction, and financial support for schools.²⁰ Along the same lines, Charles Ageron states that the Plan meant a fantastic expenditure by France and resulted in a real rise in the standard of living for thirty per cent of Muslims living in the cities, and Europeans alike.²¹ Furthermore, in case of politics and administration, the number of Muslim servicemen and public employees went up to a point at which Muslim mayors outnumbered the French.²²

To most settlers, however, despite some benefits, the Constantine speech was unpalatable and attempts were made to protest against it. In the same vein, the FLN rejected the Constantine plan. On face value, one could think that the Constantine programme achieved its objectives, but what is important is that this was a programme conceived against the backdrop of decades of institutionalised inequality and mistrust between the two communities, French and Algerians, and was unlikely to reverse or hold the tide of nationalist sentiment. Even by the time the Constantine speech was made, de Gaulle's policy on the future of Algeria was still not elaborated. Crucially important was that in all his speeches in 1958 he made the studious omission of any other precise forecast of the political future of Algeria other than a general reference to its remaining within the French Community. At the same time, post-May 1958 was the period when the Algerian problem moved to a higher level, from an internal French affair to a major international issue.

The year 1959 was significant in a number of ways. France still regarded the FLN as a "bunch of rebels" bent on violence while claiming to represent the majority of the Moslem population of Algeria, and in 1959 France's army under Massu's replacement Maurice Challe came as close as ever it would to ending the Algerian war militarily. Paradoxically, however though France had won the war in Algeria itself, there was the move from a military solution towards a political solution. 1959 was important for de Gaulle's decision to move towards Algerian independence.

On 3 September 1959 the American President Dwight Eisenhower arrived in Paris for talks with President de Gaulle. Though not much was revealed in the joint communique issued at the end, it does appear that President Eisenhower did exert some pressure on the French leader to pursue a more liberal policy in Algeria so that negotiations could take place between the antagonists later. The visit aroused much speculation in London and Paris that President de Gaulle was about to make an important announcement on Algeria. The speculations were finally confirmed on 16 September 1959 when General de Gaulle addressed the nation via radio and television on Algeria's future. For the first time de Gaulle uttered the words "self-determination" and said that peace must come first. This was part of what he said in his speech :

*....I deem it necessary that recourse to self-determination be here and now proclaimed. The question, obviously will be put to the Algerians as individuals. There has never been, throughout recorded history, any Algerian unity or state, far less any Algerian sovereignty.*²³

He went on further to say that as for the time of elections ;

I will decide upon it at the latest four years after the actual restoration of peace ; that is to say once not more than 200 persons a year will lose their lives, either in ambushes or isolated attacks....But since for a year now it has been settled that-through the institutions of equal rights, the single college, and the emergence of a majority of Muslim representatives-the political future of Algerians is to depend on Algerians...what then could be the meaning of rebellion?...Why then, should the odious strife and the fratricidal murders, which are still drenching the Algerian soil with blood

continue.²⁴

President de Gaulle then offered the Algerians three choices:

either-secession, "where some believe independence would be found." France would then leave Algeria. "I am convinced personally that such an outcome would be incredible and disastrous...secession would carry in its wake the most appalling poverty, frightful political chaos, widespread slaughter, and soon after, the warlike dictatorship of the communists... Those Algerians, regardless of origin, who might wish to remain French, would do so in any case, and France would arrange if need be, for their regrouping and resettlement. On the other hand, the operation of oil wells, the handling and shipping of Saharan oil-which is the result of French efforts, and which is of interest to the whole Western world-would be ensured in any event."

or-out-and-out identification with France (that is, integration), "such as is implied in equality of rights: Algerians can accede to all political, administrative and judicial functions of the state, and have free access to the public service... and become part and parcel of the French people..."

or-the government of Algerians, backed up by French help, and in close relationship with her, as regards the economy, education, defence and foreign relations (that is, association). "In that case, the internal regime of Algeria should be of the federal type, so that the various communities-French, Arabs, Kabyle, Mozabite-who live together in the country, would find guarantees for their own way of life, and a framework for co-operation."²⁵

He then concluded by referring to the violence and turmoil in saying :

Unless it be the work of a group of ambitious agitators, determined to establish by brute force and terror their totalitarian dictatorship, and believing that they will one day obtain from the [French] Republic the privilege of discussing with it the fate of Algeria, thus building up these agitators into an Algerian government. There is not a chance that France would lend herself to anything so arbitrary. The future of Algerians rests with Algerians, not as forced on them by knife and machine-gun, but according to the will which they will legitimately express through universal suffrage. With them and for them, France will see to the freedom of their choice."²⁶

De Gaulle still hoped that any solution arrived at on the Algerian question would be one of association with France not full independence.

There is no doubt that de Gaulle's speech and actions were contrary to the army's wishes and expectations. Imposing his authority on the army de Gaulle is said to have angrily told Massu in September 1959 that "all the colonised peoples of the world were throwing off the yoke," and added that : "You are not the Army for its own sake. You are the

Army of France. You exist only through her, for her and in her service.”²⁷ This clearly shows that de Gaulle was a step ahead of the army. After dithering for a while the FLN welcomed the speech as a positive step towards achieving peace. To the settlers and the French army in Algeria the speech was a fatal blow. The settlers viewed the speech as taking away their birthright as French citizens in Algeria. The army began to doubt the wisdom of fighting for a country that would later be given away. From then onwards the army and colons forged an “unholy alliance” to preclude any move of relinquishing *Algerie francaise*.

What came to be known as the barricades week began on 24 January 1960 and ended at the beginning of February. What lay at the heart of this rebellion was the 16 September speech of de Gaulle offering self-determination to Algeria. The European colons felt that they were being abandoned, and some sections of the army under General Massu tended to sympathise with them. They began to build barricades around the city of Algiers in protest. As days passed by the situation became tense all over the country and there were reports of skirmishes between the army and protestors. In one of these clashes nineteen people were killed and one hundred and forty-one were wounded.²⁸ After de Gaulle’s radio and televised broadcast on 29 January 1960 which was relayed by Eurovision to listeners in Britain and most Western European countries, the barricades began to disintegrate. The general impact of de Gaulle’s speech was that it shifted military and public opinion in his favour. But it marked the end of whatever honeymoon de Gaulle had enjoyed in Algeria, and the beginning of the final run-in to independence.

d. Britain and Africa, May 1958 to January 1960

As stated earlier, the coming back to power of de Gaulle marked a new relationship between France and her African colonies. For instance in September 1958 he had offered the French Commonwealth free option of association or independence. A year later he shocked the French army and settlers by offering self-determination to the Algerians. French moves in her other African territories meant that Britain was now being left behind in the march towards decolonisation. Instead of taking the lead in withdrawal from Africa, Britain was now in danger of being one of the last, ahead only of the brutal and more repressive Portuguese. This section of the discourse deals with the evolution of British policy towards Africa in a space of about two years beginning in May 1958. As mentioned in chapter two, one of the central tenets of post-Second World War British colonial policy was planned evolution of the colonies towards self-government and ultimate independence. The international climate after May 1958 was to put this policy to the test, and it is part of the purpose of this section to investigate how British colonial policy adjusted in this changing international situation. By the second half of 1958, Britain still believed in this policy of controlled evolution of the colonies and further still believed that events could be controlled and managed for the benefit of Britain as she had various interests in various colonies. For instance, in some colonies London had to contend or deal with the question of the presence of large numbers of European settlers, and in others strategic considerations relating to British global influence during this era of Cold War rivalry involved the maintenance of military bases or rights.

The year 1959 was crucial for British colonial policy makers and it became more clear that there was gradual flexibility sinking into British policy towards her colonies. The shift in British policy could be attributed to what was happening in the colonies themselves and the metropole. A combination of factors or events came into play and facilitated this colonial policy shift. In January 1959 the then Colonial Secretary Lennox-Boyd set dates for independence for East African colonies. Tanganyika was to achieve independence in 1970, Uganda in 1971, and Kenya in 1975.²⁹ But within less than five years all these countries were independent, and it is part of this section to investigate why there was a sudden shift towards this trend.

By 1959 there was growing evidence that the colonial territories in Africa would soon be engulfed by the kind of large-scale unrest and turmoil which had swept across Asia at the end of the Second World War. The most striking example of this was to be found not in tropical Africa but in Algeria in the Muslim Mediterranean north, but the fierceness of the struggle there which had already, by 1958, brought down the Fourth Republic in France, seemed likely to encourage anti-colonial resistance elsewhere.³⁰ In January of that year (1959) there were violent disturbances in Leopoldville, which up to then was the tranquil Belgian Congo. In March 1959 two crises in British territories sent a clear message to London that not all was well in British Africa. In March, eleven of the thousand "hard-core" Mau Mau rebels still incarcerated were beaten to death at the Hola detention camp in Kenya. An inquiry was set up and the resulting White Paper, issued in June, condemned the lack of oversight at the camp.³¹ The Hola killings received wide coverage in the British press. Still in March in 1959, African nationalists in Nyasaland embarked on a campaign against repressive Southern Rhodesian policies, where the Federal government was based. Fifty-two Africans were killed and sixty-six members of the Nyasaland African National Congress party were detained, including the colony's most prominent black leader, Dr. Hastings Banda.³² The Federal authorities then imposed a state of emergency. The British cabinet authorised a formal inquiry which resulted in the Devlin Report. The report was released in July and accused the colonial administration of running a "police state."³³ Meanwhile in May of the same year there had been an orchestrated campaign of violent intimidation directed against Asian traders in Uganda, and towards the end of the year there were serious riots in two urban areas in South Africa.³⁴

There is no clear evidence to show that these incidents were in any way connected. In each case they were related to social grievances, particularly among residents of the towns, where unemployment was rife and living conditions appalling, but also to the lack of African representation in government. They continued well into the 1960s, however, and prompted Whitehall officials to think critically about colonial policy.

One of the initiatives that Macmillan undertook in 1959 was the creation of a Royal Commission under Sir Walter Monckton charged with investigating and reporting on the viability of the Central African Federation prior to the Constitutional Conference set for 1960. To the Central African settlers it was widely hoped that this constitutional review conference would lead to the white-dominated Federation's full independence along the South African model. Despite heated opposition from Sir Roy Welensky, the European

Prime Minister of the Federation, Macmillan was determined to send the Commission as he remarked that "Unhappily, African opinion is all the time being inflamed."³⁵ In his brief to Monckton, Macmillan revealed his assessment of the problem :

*...I am sure that this is one of the most important jobs in our long history for, if we fail Central Africa to devise something like a workable multi-racial state, then Kenya will go too, and Africa may become no longer a source of pride or profit to the Europeans who have developed it but a maelstrom of trouble into which all of us will be sucked...The cruder concepts, whether of the left or right, are clearly wrong. The Africans cannot be dominated permanently (as they are trying to do in South Africa) without any proper opportunity for their development and ultimate self-government. Nor can the Europeans be abandoned. It would be wrong for us to do so, and fatal for African interests...*³⁶

One of the decisive factors in the evolution of British colonial policy after 1958 was the appointment of a new Colonial Secretary, in the person of Iain Macleod, following the October 1959 general election. Macleod was a passionate, forward-looking and committed liberal Tory, who despite back-bench revolt courageously presided over British withdrawal from the majority of its African territories. It appears that after the holding of the October 1959 general election which returned the Conservative Party to office with an increased majority, Macmillan was encouraged to approach the African problems with greater confidence and determination.

On 1 November 1959, Macmillan made the decision to visit Africa himself at the start of the new year. He then wrote the following informative message to Cabinet Secretary Norman Brook ;

*Young people of all Parties are uneasy about our moral basis. Something must be done to lift Africa on to a more national plane, as a problem to the solution of which we must all contribute, not out of spite...but by some really imaginative effort...*³⁷

The African tour was to last six weeks and to cover Nigeria, Ghana, The Central African Federation and South Africa. The choice of South Africa raised a storm in the House of Commons. The country had come to occupy a unique position internationally because of its white supremacist racial policy of discrimination called *apartheid* adopted since 1948. In the House of Commons, the opposition Labour Party members of Parliament frequently challenged the Prime Minister to explain the purpose of his visit to South Africa. They argued that the Prime Minister's proposed visit would be interpreted very frequently as meaning an endorsement of the *apartheid* system to which the moral conscience of the whole world was opposed.³⁸ For instance in the House, the leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell asked the Prime Minister that "in view of the repercussions, however, which the policy of *apartheid* has in other parts of the Commonwealth, will the Prime Minister urge upon the Prime Minister of South Africa the desirability of modifying that policy as soon as possible?"³⁹ On the whole, the Opposition wanted Macmillan to declare himself against *apartheid*, by doing which he would be doing a great deal to strengthening the real bonds of the Commonwealth which were being weakened by this policy of racial discrimination.

Meanwhile, in the course of 1958, Whitehall had initiated a major interdepartmental discussion of British colonial policy in Africa. On the eve of Macmillan's tour, this culminated in an influential December 1959 Foreign Office memorandum entitled "Africa : The Next Ten Years." The paper was to provide a framework for discussion between Britain and her Commonwealth and Western allies, namely France and the United States. It was to decide what attitude the West should adopt towards what it called the "rapid march of events in Africa."⁴⁰ The Foreign Office's memorandum discussed the influences at work in the continent examining the Soviet penetration and the development of Pan-Africanism. On the former the paper stated that it was one of the negative influences at work in Africa. On this Soviet threat the paper commented that if the Western Governments appeared to be reluctant to concede independence to the African dependent territories, they might alienate African opinion and turn it towards the Soviet Union after independence. On Pan-Africanism the paper noted "one simple and recognisably common factor in the political ferment at work in all African territories today, namely, the desire on the part of Africans generally to be rid of external European domination and their belief in their right and ability to govern themselves."⁴¹ According to this memorandum it was stated that the form and pace of constitutional advance in much of British East and Central Africa were likely to vary from those typical in other parts of Africa owing to the presence of considerable non-African settled communities on which most of these territories were largely dependent both economically and administratively.⁴²

The Foreign Office paper went on to consider the next decade and set out the likely developments in the colonies. It drew pessimistic conclusions. In its general assessment of the future development of Africa, the memorandum concluded that Africa would become "Balkanised," divided into a large number of independent states in which black people would have achieved *de facto* control and would have established governments which, though professing to be democratic, would in fact be largely authoritarian in their outlook.⁴³ In East Africa by 1970 Tanganyika and Uganda would have attained internal self-government and Kenya would still be prepared for this process. But, owing to the backwardness of the majority of Africans in all three territories and the multi-racial nature of Kenya, in particular, British authority would remain and would still, in the last resort, prevail. In the case of Central Africa, the Foreign Office memorandum stated that while the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had considerable economic achievement to its credit, it was bedevilled by Africans fears being dominated by local Europeans and by European fears of being submerged by an "uncivilised" African nationalism.⁴⁴

The memorandum went on to state that if the following year's Conference on the Central African Federation was a success, this would mean that by 1965 the Europeans would still be the main driving force of government in Southern Rhodesia, and the central Federal Government. The United Kingdom Government would still be in ultimate control of the Governments of the two Northern territories. In Northern Rhodesia, Africans would be playing an increasingly substantial part in the legislature as well as participating in the executive. In Nyasaland, Africans were likely to form an unofficial majority in the legislature and also playing a prominent part in the executive. The

political situation would remain stable in the next five years. But, the Foreign Office cautioned that if the 1960 Conference failed to find a solution acceptable to both parties concerned (Africans and Europeans), the picture was likely to grow bleaker.

What was to be British interest in Africa in the next ten years? The memorandum concluded that Britain's interest would be general ones such as those of the West, mainly the maintenance of peace and political stability in Africa, the exclusion of subversive influences and the encouragement of pro-Western sentiment. There was to be the maintenance and development of British trade with Africa and the encouragement of British investment. Britain was to ensure the safety and welfare of white settlers and other minorities in her former colonial territories and she also had to fulfil certain defensive requirements in Africa.⁴⁵ For instance, Britain was to maintain in Kenya an element of the strategic reserve to reinforce the small detachment which could be quickly deployed in the Persian Gulf. And, in addition, Britain was to retain modest but equally important naval facilities at Mombasa. Britain was also to secure over-flying and staging rights in other parts of Africa such as Nigeria, Gambia, or Sierra Leone to serve as back-up for East Africa, Middle East and South-East Asia.⁴⁶ Finally, the way London handled constitutional advance and racial relations in Central Africa would be critical for the future interests of the United Kingdom and the West. If the "partnership" and "federation" experiment failed Southern Rhodesia might be forced into the orbit of the Union of South Africa, while the two northern territories in whole or part might join the African *bloc* north of the Congo river. Consequently, if Federation was maintained by force and without the consent of the African people, the Western position in black Africa would be seriously weakened.

Macmillan himself had maintained interest in the debate leading to the production of this Foreign Office memorandum. In a personal minute in July 1959 he minuted that "African problems will undoubtedly become more important to us in the next ten years and this was one of the few parts of the world in which the European powers still have direct influence."⁴⁷ He went on to state that he did not propose a quick readjustment of policies in Africa but it was time to start thinking of future policy. He further minuted that there was need to examine the relative success of the various Colonial systems in developing a type of African political system capable of standing on its own feet and favourably disposed towards the West.⁴⁸ Plans for consultations with American, French and Belgian officials were drawn up in preparation for a new African initiative. The memorandum provided the Prime Minister with the briefing he required for his mission.

e. Britain and Algeria, May 1958 to January 1960

As the political turmoil in France reached a critical moment in the last week of May 1958, most French newspapers were censored. For the British press, this was manna from heaven and they had a field day. British newspapers were in big demand in Paris as the French were starved of the news of the unfolding political crisis in their midst. Only the *Manchester Guardian* took advantage of this scenario and wrote directly to the French public. On 27 May 1958 the paper published its first leader in French, and this was later reproduced by *Figaro* and *Le Monde*.⁴⁹ As the drama unfolded in the final

week of May, each change and shift in the events dominated the front pages day by day of Fleet Street and special correspondents were despatched to every corner of France, who left no facet of this confused story unreported. Most of the British newspapers' comments endeavoured to illuminate the complexities of the French situation and the personality of de Gaulle himself. Generally, British press reportage of the prospect of de Gaulle assuming the reins of power once again was mixed, ranging from pessimism to guarded optimism.

The *Daily Herald* warned of the menace of dictatorship in France if General de Gaulle returned to power. On Tuesday 26 May 1958, it advised de Gaulle to take "the only honourable course" and "renounce his bid for power."⁵⁰ This was a somewhat unrealistic advice in view of the momentum of events in France. The following day the paper headlined its leader "Betrayal."⁵¹ In this article it argued that nothing could now disguise the fact that de Gaulle was thinking like a dictator. It went further to state that the pillars of freedom everywhere were shaken. The *News Chronicle* also warned that the danger with France was that the country was separated by one slip of the knife from military dictatorship. The *Manchester Guardian* argued that if the choice for France was between de Gaulle and civil war, then the former was preferable. But if the choice was between de Gaulle and parliamentary government, then every sound instinct would be for Parliament. The paper placed its hope in de Gaulle's wish to come in by the "regular procedure."

For its part the *Daily Telegraph*, though with some reservations welcomed de Gaulle's emergence as a contender for power. It argued that his decision to form a government was "a constructive and welcome move." It went further and stated that if the General did not exist, France would have to invent him. Nothing was to be gained by discussing de Gaulle in any other context than the collapse of normal parliamentary authority. The *Daily Mail* along the same lines as the *Telegraph* went further and stated that France under de Gaulle could stimulate Western thinking on world problems. The *Daily Express* for its part wrote that the news coming out of France of the political situation were inconclusive and as such this could only bring dismay to her friends. The *Daily Mirror* in its usual critical reportage stated that "no democratic newspaper and no democrat," could possibly welcome the news that the sexagenarian General was poised to take over power in France with a blank cheque.⁵²

In the House of Commons during Prime Minister's Question time on 10 June 1958 the coming to power of General de Gaulle became a burning issue in which the Prime Minister was taken to task on the matter. Stephen Thomas Swingler asked the Prime Minister why he sent a message of congratulation to General de Gaulle on his investiture as French Prime Minister.⁵³ On the same subject Konni Zilliacus asked the Prime Minister why, in view of the circumstances in which General de Gaulle acceded to power, he considered it desirable to send the General a message of congratulation couched in the particular term used.⁵⁴ Standing in for the Prime Minister was R.A. Butler (Lord Privy Seal) who responded by saying that the Prime Minister's message to his French counterpart was designed to accord with the spirit of friendship between Britain and France.⁵⁵

Not at all amused by this answer Swinger supplemented his question by asking if the House was to take it that it was now routine custom for the Prime Minister to send a message of congratulation to all incoming Prime Ministers? He went further and asked if the Lord Privy Seal was aware that de Gaulle came to power as a result of a blackmailing threat of armed rebellion and immediately sent the French Parliament packing? How do congratulations serve the interest of either discretion or democracy.⁵⁶ Butler responded by saying that there was nothing unprecedented or improper in the Prime Minister sending a message of congratulation to another Prime Minister, nor can he find anything that was open to criticism in the terms of the Prime Minister's message. This was the typical Foreign Office answer avoiding the real issue at hand.

Now what was Whitehall's official thinking now that de Gaulle was in power? The answers to this are quite revealing. It is quite clear that once it became apparent that de Gaulle would be the next leader of France, the Macmillan administration expected quite a lot in his dealings with the Algerian problem and other Western alliance concerns. This was revealed by Macmillan's personal letter to de Gaulle on 3 June 1958. Macmillan expressed the wish that the imminent visit by de Gaulle to Algeria be a success and hoped that it might lay the foundations for a satisfactory settlement of the North African problem.⁵⁷ Macmillan noted that if de Gaulle could achieve such a settlement, the General would indeed have rendered a notable service, not only to France, but to the Western Alliance as a whole, whose interests are so bound up with the peaceful development of Africa and Asia. The Prime Minister went further and said that the British would certainly watch de Gaulle's efforts to bring about an improvement in the situation in North Africa with every sympathy. Macmillan concluded by stating that Britain hoped that any solution to the North African problem would take into account the leading role France had played in that part of the world and must have regard for France's special responsibilities and interests. From the above, it can be said that there was fairly general satisfaction in London about de Gaulle's return to power.

Unlike London, Washington had extreme concerns about the return of de Gaulle to office. A Whitehall brief to Macmillan on 6 June 1958, as he was about to set out on a visit to the United States, cautioned him about the kind of atmosphere he was likely to encounter mainly on American views on the accession of de Gaulle to power. The brief also stated what kind of attitude or relationship Britain must adopt in dealing with France. On the first issue, the brief stated that the Americans were distrustful of de Gaulle and believed that his advent to power was bound to end disastrously for NATO.⁵⁸ In the British view de Gaulle's Government was faced with two main problems, namely, Algeria and the financial situation. It was argued that it was in British interests to help General de Gaulle as much as possible to solve the above two problems, so as to avert the consequences of an angry reaction against him by his disappointed compatriots. A positive solution to these obstacles, London believed, would be an inestimable service not only to France but to the whole alliance.

Macmillan was advised in the brief to dissuade the Americans from pushing France too far such as by demanding her to commit herself about her NATO and European policies.

Britain was to aim for a united stance in public, though just like the Americans the British had worries or reservations about French policy in NATO or anywhere else. The Prime Minister was also advised not to offer any advice about North Africa for the time being. This was because de Gaulle's policy was not yet enunciated. But, Whitehall speculated on the likely course of de Gaulle's North Africa policy. It was believed that de Gaulle was not likely to follow the wishes of the extremists in Algeria. His probable course was likely to favour a solution which he had always had in the past, in which Algeria would form a unit in a Federation which would include Morocco and Tunisia. Now that the latter two were independent, such ideas might be thought to be out of date. Nevertheless, Downing Street speculated that de Gaulle might still want to revive such ideas in some form or other.

The Prime Minister was to impress upon the Americans the importance of de Gaulle remaining in office. According to Her Majesty's Government, if de Gaulle's government collapsed the consequences would be dire. So, the Americans ought to be generous or supportive of him as they had been to his predecessors. On the Soviet threat, Macmillan was to disabuse the Americans of any ideas they might have had of France cohabiting with Moscow. In London's view, Paris was well aware of the nature of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. So, de Gaulle's experiment was to be helped or supported by his Western allies so as to succeed. The success would be measured by what the General was able to do with Algeria. In other terms, Britain regarded de Gaulle as the man of the moment who if steered in the right course could bring the Algerian problem to a resolution and result in France playing a vital role within the NATO alliance, more so that the Communist threat was escalating.

In its outlook of the political situation in Algeria and France, a British annual review report of 1958 on Algeria concluded that General de Gaulle enjoyed the confidence of the Moslem population in a way enjoyed by no other French leader since the outbreak of the rebellion.⁵⁹ It went on to say that the new constitution offered some stability and removed the fear of sudden changes of direction which were inspired by the unstable French Governments of the Fourth Republic. But the report went further to state that most Algerians did not understand the sweeping economic projects of the Constantine programme.⁶⁰ And for some reason, most Moslems had the blind hope that de Gaulle would somehow bring the war to an end in agreement with the FLN. This British annual review report ended in a sanguine note that whatever agreement de Gaulle reached with the FLN, he seemed certain of the wholehearted support of the entire Moslem population and possibly of a larger part of the European population,⁶¹ despite the continuing terrorist attacks.

After Michel Debre's (French Prime Minister) visit to Britain in April 1959, the two countries agreed to hold official discussions about Africa twice a year.⁶² Interestingly, the discussions dealt in fact only with Africa south of the Sahara and specifically excluded Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.⁶³ These bipartite talks were thought to be very useful in bringing British and French policies in Black Africa generally into line.

On a stop over in London to Paris at the end of August 1959, President Eisenhower

discussed Algeria with the British Prime Minister Macmillan at Chequers. President Eisenhower was going to Paris to urge President De Gaulle to take a definite action to end the Algerian conflict. In these discussions the American President stated that he would be willing to support the French over Algeria if they were proposing a reasonable policy to bring about a settlement in that colony.⁶⁴ The President stated that he did not think and believe that a solution could be found only through military means. In response, Macmillan expressed sympathy for the French difficulties and dilemma in Algeria. The Prime Minister went on to say that :

*They had a great record of colonial achievement there. They had developed the country, and given its inhabitants the benefits of education and freedom from disease - with the result that the Arab population had risen from 3 million to 11 million. They now faced the difficult problem of transition from dependence to self-government - a problem made even more acute by the presence of one million French colons. They had to find a way of constitutional development suited to a multi-racial community - and the British knew, from experience, how difficult it was. But the multi-racial state presented one of the most urgent and important problems in Africa as a whole. It was not peculiar to Algeria; it confronted the United Kingdom also in East and Central Africa. It was vitally important that the attempts to solve this problem on a multi-racial basis should succeed. For, if they failed, there were only two alternatives : either the white settlers would assert their right to rule by force, or the Africans would assume power by violence.*⁶⁵

As a further sign that Macmillan was very worried by this French agony he went on by saying to Eisenhower that: "We have our Algerias coming to us - Kenya and Central Africa."⁶⁶ Macmillan's statements were made against the backdrop of British colonial embarrassments in March 1959, namely the Hola camp killings in Kenya and the Nyasaland (Malawi) riots. At the same time the Commonwealth Relations Office had warned that Britain could not sustain much longer the contradictions between "one person, one vote" in West Africa, and a multiracial balance weighted against blacks elsewhere.⁶⁷

The 16 September 1959 speech on "self-determination" of Algeria was a turning point in France's policy towards the North African colony. The interest that the speech attracted in the British press, government circles, and across the atlantic attested to this. In the case of the British press, the reportage ranged from unequivocal welcome of the speech to pessimism in some quarters. *The Times* reported on the 17 September 1959 that the importance of the speech, both in its international and national setting, was clearly likely to be great.⁶⁸ Self-determination for Algeria had now been declared in the most solemn manner possible to be the main aim of French policy. Even more striking was the inclusion of secession among the choices which the Algerians would be called upon to make.⁶⁹ In the same edition, *The Times* diplomatic correspondent reported that the Foreign Office gave an officially cautious welcome to President de Gaulle's statement on Algeria, but there was no mistaking the real warmth with which the statement had in fact been greeted in London.⁷⁰

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that from Washington, President Eisenhower in his press conference had described General de Gaulle's Algerian proposals as "constructive."⁷¹ He said he was "greatly encouraged" by them, although he was quite sure they would be attacked by the extremists on both sides. He praised General de Gaulle for his initiative and said it was fully worthy of his efforts. The plan was completely in accord with the American position that the right to self-determination should be extended to all people. The plan was one which he believed the United States could support.

In its editorial comment the *Daily Telegraph* unequivocally welcomed the speech and singled out General de Gaulle for praise. The paper said that General de Gaulle had radically altered French policy in Algeria and this was shown by the warm welcome President Eisenhower gave the new offer. The *Telegraph* argued that from now onwards there should be no further question about the correct policy for the United States and United Kingdom to adopt at the United Nations. They should concentrate every shred of influence they could muster in marshalling maximum support for France. The paper went further and stated that the FLN should be left in no doubt that the General's offer appeared fair and just to world opinion of all races. One of the virtues of the plan, argued the *Daily Telegraph* was that it did not appear to require any humiliating surrender from the rebels such as raising a white flag and admitting defeat in Paris. What they had to do was to reduce the scale of killings to below two hundred a year. The article further argued that, if the FLN had any prudence left, or any confidence in the validity of its own claims to speak for the Algerian people, it would be well advised to take advantage of this piece of inspired political conjuring. For in effect the General was showing the rebels how to change from outlaws into legitimate politicians without anybody noticing the transformation. The *Telegraph* editorial comment went further and stated that, when it is recalled that fifteen months ago General de Gaulle was swept to power to the cry of *Algeria Francaise*, his offer now of independence was little short of miraculous. And having been brought to power by the Army and the settlers it was feared that General de Gaulle would remain their captive. In proving these past fears false the General made it possible that hopes about the future of Algeria would at last turn out to be true.

For its part the *Guardian* was not so welcoming, but instead questioned the premise of President de Gaulle's offer. The paper stated that the last of the three choices offered to the Algerians was evidently not exactly that of a member-state of the French community though it resembled it. The President described it as "government of the Algerians by the Algerians supported by French aid and in close union with her for economic policy, education, defence, and foreign relations."⁷² It thus appeared that the only form of self-government that the President was offering Algeria would differ from that of, say, Madagascar or Senegal, in that the internal arrangements of Algeria would have to be approved by France, whereas this was not the case with the Constitutions of the member-states of the French Community. The *Guardian* stated further that, earlier in his speech de Gaulle had accepted the view of those French historians who had always stressed the lack of continuous Algerian State in the past. So, according to the paper, the offer he was making was an alternative to independence and to integration but one which lacked attraction for those young Algerians who insisted upon their desire to be a nation, whether or not they had been one in the past. The *Daily Herald* dismissed the speech

saying that the only development in de Gaulle's plans for Algeria in it was the promise "to consult Algeria about its future within four years of the end of the fighting between French troops and rebels."⁷³ Implied in the paper's article was that the statement indicated no change of French policy towards Algeria.

Now, what were Whitehall's reaction to the September speech on self-determination? As soon as De Gaulle finished the speech, Ambassador Jebb wired the Foreign Office and stated the following as his immediate reactions. "The speech was magnificently delivered and, so far as it went convincing."⁷⁴ Then, he went on and stated his main deductions which were:

*The General has written off the FLN as hopeless and is attempting to appeal over their heads to the Algerian Moslems. As expected, he offered the Algerians as a whole complete independence at the end of period of up to four years from the time pacification is achieved, if they so desired. But if they do choose independence it is clear that anyone who wants to remain French (and more especially the "Colons") will be "regrouped," while in all events France will hang on to the oil of the Sahara. The prospect of independence is thus not very alluring and no doubt much will be made of this by the critics of French policy. Of the two other alternatives, union with France was described in glowing terms and the prospect of autonomy within the French community was tempered by the statement that in that event "federalism" would have to be imposed in Algeria in order to guarantee the rights of the various communities. In my own view this praise of "integration" (as it has been called up to now) was made to please the French right-wing and I doubt whether the General really thinks it is a likely development. On the other hand, if he wants to induce the Moslems to accept autonomy he is presumably counting on the internal differences in Algeria between Kabyles, Arabs and so forth overcoming the tendency towards union which is naturally the objective of the FLN. In any case the General throughout directly contested any claim that Algeria as such might have to be considered as a nation. It is clear that there will be few critics of the General's proposals in France, and possibly even not many in Algeria. Whether it will convince neutral opinion is perhaps more doubtful. On the one hand it is obvious that the General could not have gone much further than he did... But I imagine that, if the United States Government are prepared to bless his programme, there will not now be much danger of a two-thirds majority against France in the United Nations.*⁷⁵

On 17 September 1959, Jebb again wrote to the Foreign Office on the speech. He stated that De Gaulle's categorical acceptance of "self-determination" was in any case a major step forward in the evolution of French policy and thinking on Algeria.⁷⁶ Equally important was acceptance of the possibility of independence, even though the General preferred to regard this as "secession" and depicted it in luridly pessimistic terms. Jebb then went on and considered the prospects for a cease-fire and said:

The major criticism of de Gaulle's approach, however valid and understandable his reasons, is that he refuses to take account of the reality of the FLN as leaders of the rebellion. Indeed (as I have said) it looks as if he has given them up as a bad job. His categorical refusal to negotiate with them politically (based on the unexceptionable principle that only free Algerian elections could qualify them as a representative), the excessively disobliging tone adopted towards them and the oblique way in which his last year's cease-fire offer is reviewed all make it difficult, if not impossible, to see how the FLN could be expected to stop fighting and descend into the Algerian political arena. Perhaps de Gaulle hopes to split the rebel leadership, there is certainly much rumoured dissension amongst them; more likely, however, he is not thinking in terms of an immediate cease-fire but hopes that as military pacification continues, so disaffection amongst the rebels and between them and the civil population will spread and peace thus gradually return. His own criterion for the re-establishment of peace is a maximum of 200 dead within a year. On present form, such a figure seems still far from achievement.⁷⁷

Jebb concluded his despatch with the following summary:

We presumably welcome wholeheartedly the principles now enunciated by de Gaulle. His ultimate objective, if attainable, is equally the most desirable for the West. In the immediate future, therefore, I recommend that we should do all we can to help him, particularly at the United Nations. We should not, however, delude ourselves that the statement makes much more likely any rapid end to the fighting, failing some total collapse of the FLN, which is I suppose always conceivable. Disheartening as this prospect may seem, it is nevertheless of major importance that French policy should now at least be directed by a man pursuing a clearly expressed and consistent aim.⁷⁸

From Algiers, Her Majesty's Consul General reported to the Foreign Office that the speech was received in complete calm.⁷⁹ First reactions are expected criticism by the Right Wing *Echo d'Alger* opposing self-determination as rejection of election and referendum of the past year, and unconstitutional as risking integrity of the Republic.⁸⁰ Categorical rejection of negotiation with the FLN as mentioned in the speech was welcomed.

Meanwhile, in London the Foreign Office released the following statement to the press regarding de Gaulle's speech:

Her Majesty's Government have read the statement made by President de Gaulle about Algeria with the greatest attention. They welcome it as a statement of policy of the highest importance. It is their earnest hope that the policy announced by the President will bring peace to Algeria and lead to a settlement which is in accord with the desires both of the people of Algeria and France. It is clearly in the general interest that such a settlement should be reached.⁸¹

Meeting the French ambassador Jean Chauvel on 4 November 1959, Harold Macmillan had this say about the French leader, "although President de Gaulle might fall over Algeria no-one else could possibly succeed."⁹⁶ This was clear endorsement of the French President by the British Prime Minister. After de Gaulle's West African tour in December 1959, Foreign Office advisors wanted the Prime Minister, on the eve of his own visit to Africa, to personally congratulate the General on his successful mission.⁸³ The British Government viewed the General's success in West Africa as having contributed enormously to the prospects of a peaceful evolution in French African States, which was a Western as well as a French interest. Though liking to be congratulated by the British, de Gaulle was very sensitive to any suggestion that the French Community was developing or evolving along Commonwealth lines. He intensely disliked or resented the comparison and insisted that the Community was entirely a product of the French national genius.

The events of the "week of the barricades" daily dominated the front pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, as it followed the twists and turns of this episode. Though the Algerian situation during the week of the barricades did cause some alarm both in London and Washington, it does appear from the former that the authorities were unexcited by the whole Algiers uprising. It appears that British officials had sufficient confidence in de Gaulle's popularity, ability and resolve to deal with the situation. This thinking was expressed in most of Ambassador Jebb's reports to the Foreign Office.⁸⁴ These reports gave factual information of what was happening on a daily basis, but seemed not to interest the Foreign Office that much as no detailed comments or position paper was produced on the likely wider political implications.

f. Conclusion

The coming back to power in May 1958 of General Charles de Gaulle and the adoption of a new constitution, that established the Fifth Republic ushered in a new era in France's domestic and overseas politics. The new constitution created stability and brought to an end the perennial problems of government changes that were the hallmarks of the Fourth Republic. De Gaulle was now able to bring civil-military insubordination under control and this enabled him to carry forward whatever policies that he envisaged for colonial problems. In the case of Africa, he overtook Britain in the move towards decolonisation. In the much more controversial case of Algeria, his policy was less clear-cut. Nevertheless it was clear from the outset that he was determined to put an end to this "war without a name," and so enable France to break out of the position in which she had found herself since Suez, vainly endeavouring to equate the battle with the FLN with the defence of the West. While still resentful of hostile international opinion, and resistant to international pressure, he began to work towards a solution acceptable to all but the diehards of "*Algerie française*."

It is in between the advent of de Gaulle to power and the declaration of his Algerian policy, that we locate the evolution of British colonial policy in Africa. 1959 was a critical year which saw the creation of the Monckton Commission on the Central African

Federation, the decision of the Prime Minister to visit Africa, and the preparation of the Foreign Office memorandum setting out the prospects for the future, as a brief for Macmillan on his visit. The British position towards France and the Algerian problem from May 1958 to January 1960 was mixed. Whereas within Downing Street the feeling appeared to be one of welcoming de Gaulle back to public office and having confidence in him, there were still dissenting voices in London. This was reflected by the various reportage across Fleet Street and debates in the House of Commons. From Paris, Gladwyn Jebb was cautious about de Gaulle's speech on self-determination, arguing that it seemed to exclude the FLN from the political process. Official British talks with the new French government did not deal with Algeria, but concentrated on French Black Africa. Nevertheless, in conversation with Eisenhower, Macmillan showed himself aware of the comparison between Algeria and "our Algerias," Kenya and Central Africa. There can be no doubt that Algeria was very much on the Prime Minister's mind as he prepared for his visit.

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CHAPTER 7

THE END OF THE WAR, JANUARY 1960 TO EVIAN 1962

a. De Gaulle and Africa, January 1960 to Evian 1962

The year 1960 was important and a turning point for most of French Africa. With unimaginable speed, what were formerly French dependencies and members of the Community had in the course of 1960 become independent states under African majority rule. The French Community as originally constituted became moribund and ultimately relegated to the dustbin of history. France now entered into a new relationship with her former colonies. This entailed agreements on political, economic, military, financial and cultural cooperation. The stage for the fragmentation of the French Community into independent states was set in motion by Mali which in the summer of 1959 sought independence in confederation with France.¹ France accepted this request in December 1959 and negotiations with Mali soon began. No doubt, this was bound to set off a chain reaction as much in French Equatorial as in French West Africa and it is partly this, that this section of the discussion investigates, that is, how the rapid movement and momentum of events came about.

A hint in France's change or shift of policy towards French Black Africa was made by de Gaulle at Castres on 26 February 1960 when he said the following :

*Our country wants to marry the times in which it lives. We must be different with the countries we colonised formerly. They want freedom. France takes the consequences in a new manner-in the Community in which everyone has his place, freely working for the common good.*²

In April 1960, France signed with the Mali Federation and Madagascar the necessary constitutional instrument for their independence. In preparation for these territories independence, Article 86 of the Community's constitution was amended on 4 June 1960. It now stipulated that "A member state of the Community can likewise become independent through a special agreement, without ceasing to belong to the Community."³ This was contrary to the original Article 86 which as mentioned in the previous chapter stipulated that a member of the Community could become independent, but ceased then to belong to the Community. Despite some of the French Community's territories demand for independence, they still did not want to sever ties with the metropole and wanted to collaborate with her. This was illustrated on 9 June 1960 in the National Assembly when Mamadou Dia of Senegal called for a close Franco-African relationship on new terms. He said that :

*This is the occasion to render solemn homage to France which has known how to keep all the promises it made including the absolute duty to decolonise and the imperative of cooperation. France is in the process of succeeding in the best possible way in her mission as tutor.*⁴

De Gaulle continued once again to indicate that France was on the verge of a new era in her relationship with her colonies. On 14 June 1960, he spoke of the great movement

stirring Africa, the spirit of the century, saying that it would be useless to enumerate the causes of the evolution which had led France to put an end to colonisation. Because of the progress made, France had granted self-determination, for to refuse it would be to contradict the French ideal, to start endless struggles, and to draw down on France the censure of the world.

The spirit under which the African territories that were to be granted independence were to relate with France after this was summarised in a letter by Michel Debre (prime minister) to Leon M'ba of Gabon on 15 June 1960. It does appear that it was not a wish on France's part for this to happen, but an expectation that it would. The letter read thus:

*We give independence on condition that the state once independent engages itself to respect the co-operation agreements it first signs. There are two systems that come into play at the same time: Independence and co-operation agreements. One does not go without the other...I will be obliged if you would please, in acknowledging receipt of this communication confirm to me that on the proclamation of independence by the Republic of Gabon, the government of the Gabonese Republic will proceed to the signature of co-operation agreements...*⁵

Immediately after this, the Mali Federation became independent on 20 June 1960 and hot on its heels was the independence of Madagascar on 26 June 1960. As it turned out, this now had unleashed an unstoppable rush towards independence in Black Africa. August 1960 proved to be a watershed as Dahomey (Benin), Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), Chad, Central African Republic, French Congo, and Gabon became independent.⁶ They were subsequently followed by Mauritania in November 1960. This completed de Gaulle's "wind of change" in French Africa. De Gaulle had transformed, within the space of two years of coming back to power, the political geography of colonial Africa. In September 1960 more than a dozen new African states entered the United Nations, almost all of them francophone or sympathetic to France.

Now with French Africa decolonised, the period between 1960 and 1962 was marked by the signing of co-operation agreements between France and her former colonies. The agreements were either bilateral or multilateral, that is, organised on a regional basis. These accords covered economic, financial, political, military and technical questions. The policy of co-operation with Black Africa became one of the basic aspects of de Gaulle's overseas policy. The co-operation agreements thus guaranteed France most of the important rights she formerly held as a colonial power. For illustrative purposes, here follows what some of the accords dealt with. On political matters, there was to be exchange of information between France and the signatory state, but also consultation in issues of foreign policy.⁷ The corollary effect of this was that it allowed France to organise bloc votes at fora such as the United Nations, that is, support of French positions.

On economic aspects the co-operation agreements provided for French financial aid for the economies of the signatory states. The signatory states were accorded mutual preferential treatment in trade matters. Most of the countries signing the accords joined

the Franc Zone, so their currencies were tied to the French Franc, and therefore to the Bank of France.⁸ In case of military agreements they provided for defence accords, technical and military assistance agreements, and base rights in francophone Africa. In some instances they also covered the transfer of primary resources and strategic minerals, obliging the signatory state not only to give France priority in the purchase of such resources, but also, where relevant, to buy certain products from France rather than turn to other trade partners.⁹ The granting *en masse* of independence to the French dominions in French West and Equatorial Africa including the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar had far-reaching international effects for European colonialism in Africa. With French Africa liberated, de Gaulle could now turn his full attention to the Algerian problem still with no end in sight.

b. De Gaulle and Algeria, January 1960 to Evian 1962

As alluded to in the previous chapter, the week of the barricades was the moment when the Algerian opposition to Algerian independence came out into the open, and began to organise itself against the government, thus weakening de Gaulle vis-à-vis the FLN. As far as de Gaulle's opponents in the army and among the *colons* were concerned, the week of the barricades was counter-productive: because it so obviously threatened his position, it pushed him towards Algerian independence, and his broadcast of November 1960. Despite the fact that after the barricades week de Gaulle increased his rhetoric against the FLN, there were also signs that he was willing to establish some contacts with them. In March 1960, France attempted to drive a wedge between the FLN inside the country and those in exile. The French established contacts with representatives of *Wilaya* four leadership south of Algiers to negotiate the Algerian question. The head of this *Wilaya* was Si Saleh. Though the details of what these early contacts achieved are sketchy, it does appear that they established the basis for the subsequent talks which took place at Melun in June 1960. An analogy could be made to the Zimbabwean situation in March 1978 when the British government and Ian Smith concluded talks with Abel Muzorewa for the so-called "internal settlement" excluding the main nationalist movements of the country, the Zimbabwe African National Union-ZANU (PF) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union-ZAPU (PF) of Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo respectively. These Algerian men who entered talks with the French were disillusioned with the GPRA and viewed it as a clique of high-living bureaucrats and power-hungry officers, all looking for their own advancement at the expense of the majority of the people.¹⁰ From their point of view, those who were internal, should be the ones to determine the timing and conditions of negotiations since they bore the brunt of fighting. Probably, they were still clinging to the Soummam recommendations, which as stated earlier on were overturned by the CNRA meeting in Cairo in July 1957.

After some prevarication on de Gaulle's part, he accepted the inevitable when on 14 June 1960 he broadcast an invitation to the GPRA to come to France to discuss a cessation of hostilities. Eleven days later, the first official FLN delegation ever to go to France began meetings with their counterparts at the town of Melun, south of Paris. The Melun talks were held between 25 June and 29 June 1960. Whereas the French insisted on a cease-fire before everything, avoiding the core issue which was complete withdrawal from

Algeria, the FLN countered this by arguing that cease-fire was part of a comprehensive settlement of the Algerian issue. On 29 June the talks reached a stalemate and broke down with very little progress having been accomplished. As in most liberation wars, most of the men who took part at Melun were within a year killed by their compatriots, possibly for "betrayal of the struggle" or being "traitors."

Failure of the Melun talks was a welcome development by hard-liners on both sides of the conflict. In case of the FLN there was the intensification of terrorist attacks, while for the Europeans those who had been arrested for January 1960 insurrection now turned into martyrs. De Gaulle now saw that he was likely to lose the initiative so he embarked on a series of steps that would pave the way for actual negotiations for a permanent settlement. On 4 November 1960 in a television broadcast de Gaulle said he looked forward to an Algerian Republic in future. Though his speech fell short of offering complete independence to Algeria and still hoped that a settlement would be one dictated by his own terms; he took the first steps towards that independence when he established a Ministry of Algerian Affairs headed by the liberal Louis Joxe. In the same month (November) de Gaulle hinted that in the not too distant future he would call a referendum of the Algerian and French electorates on the idea of self-determination.

It was announced on 1 December 1960 that the referendum would be held on 8 January 1961. It was further announced that President de Gaulle would visit Algeria soon to prepare for this referendum, and this he did early in December. The FLN denounced this referendum as one in the many steps of France's attempt to impose its will and solution to the Algerian question. De Gaulle's visit to Algeria provided both the FLN and colons the opportunity to flex their muscles in demonstrating how much each party had in terms of followers. As always intransigently opposed to de Gaulle's Algeria policy, the European settlers called a general strike to protest against the President's presence in the country. They managed to organise a series of demonstrations which in their course increasingly became violent. The Europeans vented their fury against everyone including the police whose cars were pelted with every missile at their disposal. The demonstrations and strikes spread to different parts of the country. On 10 December 1960 in Algiers, in the working suburb of Belcourt, a European was reported to have attempted to force a Muslim shopowner to close his business in observance of the strike.¹¹ The Muslim shopowner defied the order, the European then fired. This sparked the first Muslim counter-demonstration, European cars were smashed or burned in the streets. Word spread among the Muslims and disturbances began in other areas. Arab demonstrators carried the green-and white flags resembling that of Abdelkader's shortlived state in the nineteenth century. There were also banners inscribed with phrases like "The FLN will win" and "Abbas to power"; everywhere there were cries of "long live Ferhat Abbas."¹² Similar Muslim demonstrations occurred in the European strongholds of Oran and Bone. In response, the French troops opened fire on the demonstrators resulting in the death of sixty people, of whom six were Europeans and fifty-four were Muslims.¹³ Once again a French officer was said to have commented: "We've just suffered a diplomatic *Dien Bien Phu*." All these disturbances compelled de Gaulle to cut short his visit.

Despite these Muslim and European manifestations de Gaulle did not hesitate, and

proceeded with the referendum. This was held as scheduled on 8 January 1961. The electorate was asked if they approved of "the plan submitted to the French people by the President of the Republic concerning the self-determination of the Algerian population and the organisation of the public powers in Algeria prior to self-determination."¹⁴ There were two articles in the law. The first stated that once the security situation improved, the Algerians would be allowed to vote for the political future they desired to develop with France. The second prescribed that in the meantime, through decrees, the French government should provide for the restructuring of the Algerian government so that it could cater for or devolve power in the running of affairs to the Algerians. This was to be executed through federal and departmental assemblies, the ultimate goal being to promote cooperation between the two societies. New bodies were to be set up and these were to provide guarantees for the two communities and deal with other matters which affected both Algeria and France.

The FLN appealed to its followers to abstain from the poll, and despite the army's intimidation it does appear that the call was heeded. In metropolitan France 15,196,668 people voted yes, 4,995,912 voted no, and there were 6,389,428 abstentions.¹⁵ In Algeria 1,749,969 persons cast yes votes as opposed to 767,566 who voted no. Still in Algeria there were 1,775,142 abstentions and 109,913 blank ballot papers, which in percentage terms was 42 per cent of the electorate.¹⁶ For illustrative purposes, there were some areas in Algeria which recorded higher percentages of abstention; Setif, Ferhat Abbas's home town and Constantine recorded 51 and 53 per cent respectively. Martin Stone has argued that this plebiscite result was rendered questionable by the high abstention rate.¹⁷ Overall, the results show that 56 per cent of the registered voters in Algeria bothered to vote and 75 per cent of these gave de Gaulle's proposals an overwhelming thumbs up. If the two results in metropolitan France and Algerian are put together, one can see that the Europeans in Algeria were in a minority, not only against the Muslims in Algeria, but against the Europeans in France. However questionable Stone may think the outcome in Algeria was, de Gaulle won an unquestionable majority overall - a nice use of the fact that Algeria was constitutionally part of France to turn the tables on those who demanded that it should remain so. Now, we can see quite clearly why the generals and their partisans concluded that revolt was their only option.

General de Gaulle's Algeria policy was once again put to the test in April 1961. Exiled Generals Raoul Salan, retired chief of staff Marie-Andre Zeller, General Edmond Jouhaud and Maurice Challe mounted an Army *putsch* on 22 April 1961. Salan and Challe had been commanders-in-chief in Algeria. The former had been forced into retirement from the army earlier as a result of his anti-Gaullist pronouncements. In December 1960 he sought refuge in Spain. The latter could be described as "hero turned villain," the general who nearly totally won the war in Algeria for France, having been brought in during the critical period after the 13 May 1958 events, and by the turn of 1960 having "pacified" most parts of Algeria. During the barricades week in 1960, Challe's credibility and conduct was doubted by his bosses in Paris and consequently he lost the confidence of de Gaulle. He was transferred to Central Europe to be commander of the NATO forces. In Algiers he was replaced by General Crepin. Though Challe's transfer was some kind of promotion, he left as a bitter man because he thought his

devoted career in Algeria and his so-called "Challe plan" to pacify the trouble spots in Algeria had been unceremoniously disrupted.

Challe resigned altogether from the army in March 1961. Historian Irwin Wall has argued that Challe left because he was disturbed by learning that de Gaulle's policies in Algeria had become part of a grand design to break with the United States, construct an independent nuclear force, and weaken NATO alliance.¹⁸ Furthermore, according to Wall, the three other generals apparently shared Challe's illusion that the United States would help France to keep Algeria if France gave up its nuclear weapons and accepted integration with NATO; the four generals justified their seizure of power in Algiers by claiming that they had prevented Mers-el-Kebir from becoming a Soviet base.¹⁹ In other words, they considered their action necessary to keep Algeria for vital Western interests in the Cold War supremacy.

Following the basically civilian "week of barricades," the revolt was the consequence of the generals' disillusionment with the policy of self-determination for Algeria. They viewed this policy as France's abandonment of her military and political obligations to the European population in Algeria. The order of the generals established a state of siege throughout Algeria and pronounced that anyone who had directly taken part in plans for the abandonment of the colony would be brought before a military court. The order went further and stated that "all resistance would be broken from wherever it came."²⁰ On the first day of the uprising, parachute units were brought into the capital, Algiers, and started occupying strategic positions in official buildings such as the Delegation-General, post and telegraph offices, and the radio station, which was renamed "Radio France." The Delegate-General and his commander-in-chief General Gambiez were all put under arrest.

Leaders of the rebellion now started to make calls around the country to win over provincial commanders to their cause. At the heart of this rebellion was a new French right-wing body, the Secret Army Organisation (OAS). On 23 April 1961, de Gaulle broadcasted a message denouncing the insurgents and referred to them as a quartet of retired army generals backed by a group of ambitious and fanatical officers. He went on and said, "in the name of France, I order that every means, I repeat every means, shall be employed to bar the road to these men, pending their overthrow. I forbid any Frenchman, and first of all any soldier, to obey their orders."²¹ Once again de Gaulle's oratory paid off. After this impassioned plea to the troops the Algiers mutiny crumbled on 25 April 1961. There now followed a purge of senior army officers in Algiers. Challe and Zeller were the first among a number of senior officers to be arrested. Salan and others managed to go underground. Though some people were killed as a consequence of this revolt, what was astonishing was that the insurgents actions amounted to high treason, but at their subsequent trial the prosecution did not make any effort to demand the death penalty, once again putting the French judicial system on the spotlight for collusion. Challe and Zeller were sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but the sentences began to be progressively reduced until they were acquitted. One of the factors that caused the April uprising to falter and collapse was that all wings of the French army, the air force, navy and infantry refused to rally behind the insurgents.

During this Algiers revolt, rumours abounded in Paris that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was behind Challe and his group. Paris took these unproven charges seriously. Alistair Horne has stated that there is no doubt that during his stint at NATO headquarters Challe did make firm friends of a number of high-ranking United States generals, who (Americans) made no secret of their hatred of what de Gaulle was doing to NATO....and went so far as to express enthusiasm for anyone who might rid France of her turbulent president, or, at least, force him to change his tune.²² Washington vehemently denied the charges of involvement and found them to be absurd. Though the United States had not been supportive of previous French policy in Algeria they supported de Gaulle on the basis that he represented legitimate political rule in France. Moreover, the new President John F. Kennedy (inaugurated January, 1961) had as young Democratic Party Senator for Massachusetts, been a leading figure since 1957 in the Senate advocating Algerian independence. So, it is hard for one to believe that he might have supported the Algiers revolt because the generals were totally opposed to Algerian independence. In actual fact it is claimed that the American official position was the opposite of what was suspected. Kennedy instructed his Ambassador in Paris General James Gavin to put American naval units at France's disposal and to suppress the rising if it tried to spread to Paris.²³ C.L. Sulzberger has argued that this flurry of rumours of American involvement in the revolt emanated from the Soviet press and was then propagated and given credence by anti-American forces in France such as *Le Monde* newspaper.²⁴

Though the end of the rebellion did bring the army under civilian authority, the OAS terror continued right up to the negotiations between the French government and the GPRA representatives, which took place against this background. These negotiations centred on the definition of an "Algerian Algeria." Despite de Gaulle's proclamation of an "Algerian Algeria" late in 1960, it appears that he meant something different from what the FLN perceived to mean. The French leader still hoped to achieve a settlement fashioned in his own style, and by the way he still did not recognise the FLN as the legitimate representative of the aspirations of the Algerian people. At the end of 1960, Paul Delouvrier was replaced by Jean Morin as the Delegate-General. Part of Morin's brief was to reorganise the government institutions in Algeria on the basis of an "Algerian Algeria." To Morin this meant a political entity with its own personality, in association with France, based on domestic structures of power sharing between the Europeans and moderate Muslims outside the FLN.²⁵ The end product of this, it was hoped, would be to present the FLN during negotiations with a *fait accompli* of a Muslim power structure in cooperation with France. It was further hoped that the FLN would find this French creation difficult to dismantle but instead join to work within it. The result would be a weakening of the FLN obliging it to work within this establishment as one among the many parties. This French grand plan failed as subsequent developments would reveal.

Though the army had been brought under control, the OAS continued to exist, and embarked on a terrorist campaign that formed the background against which the final negotiations for Algerian independence were conducted. These had resumed shortly after

the January referendum, in Switzerland in February 1961, between de Gaulle's confidant Georges Pompidou and the Algerian lawyer Ahmed Boumendjel (who had been at the Melun talks). Simultaneously de Gaulle invited President Bourguiba of Tunisia to Paris for discussions. Bourguiba, who after the meeting left for Rabat, Morocco for the funeral of King Mohammed V, which the GPRA delegation led by Ferhat Abbas was to attend, told journalists that indeed he had had fruitful discussions with President de Gaulle. He stated further that he felt that de Gaulle was serious about beginning the process of decolonisation in Algeria which would culminate in complete independence for the country. After the funeral President Bourguiba, the new king of Morocco Hassan II and Ferhat Abbas met in what was to be the first North African summit conference. A communique issued at the end stated that the three heads of delegations, after hearing Bourguiba's account of his meeting with de Gaulle, had decided that "no obstacles should be allowed to stand in the way of direct negotiations between the GPRA and the French within the framework of complete decolonisation."²⁶

Discussions between the French and FLN officials resumed in March 1961. During these contacts the French conceded that a cease-fire was no longer a precondition for full negotiations. They also stated that they would want to see negotiations started by means of official delegations on conditions of self-determination of the Algerian people and allied problems. Later in March, both the French and GPRA issued separate communiques but conveying the same message that the talks would open at Evian (Switzerland) on 7 April 1961. Unfortunately on 31 March 1961, the GPRA announced that it would not partake in the proposed talks. The reason given was that they were angered by Louis Joxe's remarks when addressing a press conference in Oran a few days earlier, hinting that he was willing to meet with other parties such as the MNA (Algerian National Movement) on an equal footing with the FLN. The FLN now had misgivings about this French move and questioned their motives, because to them the MNA was no longer a force to be reckoned with, as it now represented a small fraction of Algerian workers in France. To the FLN, this was a French attempt to undermine them by creating a "third force" in the future of Algeria. Despite this setback, and the revolt of the generals, contacts between the two enemies continued through the Swiss. The French and Algerians finally agreed to meet for earnest talks at Evian on 20 May 1961. Both sides sent high-powered delegations. The Algerian negotiating team was headed by Belkacem Krim (Vice-President of the GPRA) and the French by Louis Joxe (Minister for Algerian Affairs). As the two sides sat down for talks, it became clear that the differences between them were unbridgeable. It does appear that the French wanted to extract too much from the Algerians. The French first demanded guarantees for the European settlers in the form of dual citizenship, protection of European property rights, and separation of the Sahara which had vast resources of oil and gas and had only been fully integrated into Algeria in 1947. These French demands were hotly contested by the Algerians who wanted no compromises. On 13 June 1961 these talks broke down. An attempt was made on 20 to 28 July, to resuscitate the talks at Chateau de Lugrin, near Evian, but this also failed. Whereas in June it was the French who suspended the talks, in July it was the Algerians who broke them off.

In the meantime, as a consequence of the failure of these talks, de Gaulle increased his

rhetoric against the FLN by threatening to partition the northern coastal regions of the country including the Sahara into some form of "*bantustans*" (homelands) where the Europeans would be regrouped and be in the majority. This was probably a ploy to get the FLN back to the negotiating table; nevertheless, the FLN did not budge on its stance. The idea of partition was reportedly taken seriously by the Algerians, in the sense that on 5 July 1961, there were demonstrations in the country accompanied by a general strike. The demonstrations are said to have spread to Tunisia where the GPRA denounced partition as a threat to negotiations and a negation of the principle of self-determination.

With the talks at a deadlock with the French, the FLN-GPRA retreated to Tripoli (Libya) in August 1961 where an introspection of the movement was carried out. The August Tripoli meeting of the GPRA resulted in a power shift at the top of the movement. The elderly statesman Ferhat Abbas was replaced by the youthful marxist Ben Khedda as president of the GPRA. Krim was moved from the ministry of foreign affairs to interior affairs and his assistant Saad Dahlab was promoted to head the ministry. Other new ministers of the GPRA were from the left wing of the movement. Since the balance of power was tipped in favour of the left, it would not be far-fetched for one to hazard that an attempt was being made to marshal a team that would adopt aggressive diplomacy, bearing in mind the barrage of criticism that the negotiating team received from Houari Boumedienne (commander of FLN forces in Tunisia-Morocco) and his external army at the August Tripoli meeting. The new team stated that it was still committed to negotiations like its predecessor.

Right up to September 1961, France still regarded the Algerian issue as her own internal matter, as was exemplified by her rebuff of United States offer of assistance during the generals' revolt in April. But from September onwards French policy was to dramatically shift. It is stated that on 2 September 1961, de Gaulle confided to American Ambassador General James Gavin that France's policy in Algeria was one of disengagement.²⁷ Algeria had now become a burden on France and was of no use; it could go the way it wished, even the "Guinea" way was okay. But de Gaulle still entertained the idea of regrouping the European population around Algiers and Oran. In his conversation with the American Ambassador, the French leader hinted that he understood that the Sahara should revert to Algeria. France's interests in the area were in oil and gas, and she wished for an agreement on common exploitation, but in case the FLN refused, she (France) would leave. In a press conference on 5 September 1961, de Gaulle abandoned France's claim to the Sahara and said that he hoped that an agreement would be struck which would establish an association that safeguarded France's interests.²⁸ Those interests were free exploitation of the oil and gas, disposal of airfields and traffic rights for France's communications with Black Africa.²⁹ In the same press conference, de Gaulle conveyed to the FLN the message that France desired cooperation as far as it implied exchange and understanding.

As October set in, hopes were rising among Algerians of the possibility of resumption of talks and ultimately leading to peace, but at the same time terrorist activities were escalating in Paris, which was home to hundreds of thousands of Algerian emigrant workers. As a counter-measure to these terrorist attacks the Paris police imposed a

restrictive curfew on the Algerian workers quarters of Paris. The curfew "recommended" that the Muslims were not to be found in the streets between 8.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. in the morning.³⁰ On 17 October 1961, thousands of emigrant workers poured into the streets to demonstrate against the curfew and also proclaimed their support for Algerian independence. Violent clashes erupted in different points of the city between the Algerians, Police and Europeans. It is estimated that 200 Algerians were killed as a consequence of this mayhem and many others disappeared.³¹ This event and others elsewhere were pointers that the momentum for Algerian independence was irreversible and unstoppable. In mid-November 1961, de Gaulle now officially accepted the FLN as representing the wishes of the majority of the Algerian people, at the same time secrets talks between the FLN and the French began in Basle, Switzerland and ended on 19 November 1961, though no conclusive breakthrough was reached, but the door was left open for the resumption of talks in the near future.

In January 1962, the GPRA leader Ben Khedda declared that his provisional government was willing to enter into a new phase of negotiations on the basis of self-determination for the Algerian people. Addressing the French people on 5 February 1962, de Gaulle accepted this principle and also announced France's diplomatic position on future negotiations. France stated that she expected cooperation with Algeria in many fields, even if this could be a burden for her. Instructions given to the French delegation as they set out for talks with the FLN in February 1962 reveal how much importance France attached to military interests in Algeria. French Prime Minister Michel Debre was said to have told the departing team that :

*You should pay special attention to Mers-el-Kebir and the Sahara. The army would not accept the abandonment of our best naval base and of our nuclear experimental sites [in the Sahara]...Also, our troops have to remain in Algeria for a long period of time as they represent a guarantee to Algeria's Frenchmen.*³²

The emphasis and final message came from de Gaulle himself by saying that:

*Do not insist upon the problems concerning citizenship....People who voted yesterday will vote now; later, the Algerian government will enact laws concerning citizenship within the new state. However, on the economic and the military issues, try to safeguard the essential.*³³

Intensive negotiations between the French and Algerians were held between 11 February to 19 February 1962 at Les Rousses in the Jura Mountains. After tough bargaining and horse-trading the two sides concurred that they had reached a general settlement and agreed to hold the next round of talks at Evian on 7 March 1962. In the build-up to these negotiations the OAS intensified its acts of terror such as bombings, attacks on government buildings, indiscriminate killings of Muslims. These attacks were spearheaded by Generals Raoul Salan and Edmond Jouhaud, both having gone underground after the failed April 1961 army revolt. On the other hand, as the final round of talks were about to begin the FLN stationed in Tunisia intensified their attacks at various points along the 100-mile French electrified barbed wire defence system. They fired mortars and recoilless guns, and the French had to send tanks, armoured cars and B-26 bombers to repel the attacks.³⁴ These rebel attacks were possibly carried out to

strengthen their hand at the negotiation table.

The Evian accords were signed on 18 March 1962 amidst tight security around the place and well over 30 000 armed troops stood by in Paris to deal with any violence by the OAS.³⁵ The agreement stipulated that there should be a cease-fire with immediate effect, amnesty and the release of all military and political prisoners within twenty days. There was to be a referendum in which the population of Algeria would be offered three choices namely maintenance of Algeria as a French department; independence by breaking all links with France; and thirdly independence in cooperation with France.³⁶ The two countries agreed to have "mutual respect" for each other's independence.

On individual rights the settlers were to hold dual citizenship for three years and then to decide whether to assume Algerian nationality or remain French. Ownership of property by both individuals and companies were to be respected, confiscation could only happen if the right compensation deal had been agreed upon. On the economic side, Algeria was to remain in the Franc Zone and receive full economic and technical aid at the level provided for at the time under the Constantine Plan. In the Sahara, existing rights were to be respected and mineral exploitation was to be carried out under the direction of a joint Franco-Algerian agency. French companies were to have a privileged position for six years in the granting of mining concessions. In other terms, this strengthened the French presence in the Sahara. Algeria had the right to distribute mining titles and had full sovereignty in enacting mining legislation. The two nations agreed to develop cultural relations and France was to assist Algeria with personnel such as teachers and technicians.

In relation to military installations, the French forces were to be allowed to remain in Algeria for three years after independence. The Force was to be reduced to 80,000 in the first twelve months, then progressively reduced, and the whole process to be completed after three years from the day of independence. The naval base of Mers-el-Kebir was to be leased to France for fifteen years.³⁷ The use of other bases and installations including the nuclear testing centre in the Sahara were also to be granted to France for five years. The concessions of military testing ground were significant in France's realisation of her nuclear force (*force de frappe*). So, France was granted a significant number of military airfields, terrains, sites and installations. In case there were any disputes between the two countries they would be referred to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. On face value it does appear that the French had extracted much from the FLN negotiators, but in reality they had acceded to the fundamental demands of the FLN which were, their recognition as the sole negotiator, recognition of Algeria's national sovereignty with the Sahara forming part of it and cease-fire after the settlement had been reached.

There were various reactions to the Evian accords across the political spectrum in France, United States and Algeria. The right in France saw the accords as surrender, abandonment of Algeria and even illegitimate. The left viewed them as neocolonialist. De Gaulle himself referred to them as a "common sense solution" and claimed that they contained everything France wanted them to contain.³⁸ The United States was relieved that, at least, the two sides had reached an agreement acceptable to both of them. To the

Algerians, these accords were to be at the centre of acrimony in future as will be shown in the next chapter.

c. Britain and Africa, January 1960 to March 1962

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Macmillan had at the close of 1959 taken the decision to visit Africa. This African tour began at the end of January 1960. One of Macmillan's stops was South Africa. South Africa had always been a thorn in the flesh of the British government and the wider implications of her policies were unsettling to London. There was much fear in Whitehall that the settlers in East and Central Africa might choose to throw in their lot with the Union of South Africa, by rebelling against London and declaring their own independence, in which case all of Britain's work in Africa would be undone. It was feared that the policies of *apartheid* that Britain professed to detest would be established in the heart of this part of the Colonial Empire. Macmillan flew on to South Africa on 27 January 1960 where according to Alistair Horne the country was seen by Macmillan as having many parallels with Algeria where a million French settlers were resisting any form of change.³⁹ South Africa by then was almost in turmoil. For instance Nelson Mandela and many of his co-accused were on trial for treason. The black nationalist movement was in disarray having split into two, the moderate African National Congress (ANC) and the radical Pan-African Congress (PAC). At the same time the Nationalist Party government was vigorously pursuing some of its racist policies such as the banning of Africans in white universities and restricting nearly every aspect of their lives such as the compulsory carrying of passbooks for identification purposes. All across the Africa trip hints had been dropped by Tim Bligh (Macmillan's Principal Private Secretary) to the accompanying press corps that "something was cooking which would astonish and satisfy us all."⁴⁰

On 3 February 1960 Harold Macmillan made what would later be regarded as his major speech in his political career one which brought a change to the political landscape of the world. In addressing both Houses of the South African Parliament at Cape Town, Macmillan began with elaborate compliments to South African progress, and courage in two World Wars. He then went to the crux of his speech by saying :

*...Ever since the break-up of the Roman Empire one of the constant facts of political life in Europe has been the emergence of independent nations...In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe have been repeated all over the world. We have seen the awakening of national consciousness in peoples who have for centuries lived in dependence on some other power. Fifteen years ago this movement spread through Asia...Today the same thing is happening in Africa. The most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it may take different forms. But it is happening everywhere. The wind of change is blowing through this Continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. Our national policies must take account of it.*⁴¹

The phrase "wind of change," would later become most associated with Macmillan's speech as there was a rapid movement towards political independence in most of the African colonial territories.

Addressing himself specifically to the Afrikaner regime in South Africa and possibly white settlers in the Central African Federation, Macmillan went on to say :

*...It is a basic principle of our modern Commonwealth that we respect each other's sovereignty in matters of internal policy. At the same time we must recognise that, in this shrinking world in which we live today, the internal policies of one nation may have effects outside it...Our judgement of right and wrong and of justice is rooted in the same soil as yours-in Christianity and in the rule of law as the basis of a free society. This experience of our own explains why it has been our aim, in the countries for which we have borne responsibility, not only to raise the material standards of life, but to create a society which respects the rights of individuals-a society in which men are given the opportunity to grow to their full stature in political power and responsibility ; a society finally in which individual merit alone, is the criterion for a man's advancement, whether political or economic.*⁴²

Here Macmillan was attacking the heart of the *apartheid* policy in which there were vast inequalities between the minority whites and the majority blacks.

The British Prime Minister went further by attacking the policies of the *apartheid* regime but at the same time in order not to alienate the South Africans still he balanced the speech with a few conciliatory remarks. He stated that :

*As a fellow member of the Commonwealth we always try and I think, we have succeeded, in giving South Africa our full support and encouragement, but I hope you won't mind my saying frankly that there are some aspects of your policies which make it impossible for us to do this without being false to our deep convictions about the political destinies of free men to which in our own territories we are trying to give effect. I think therefore that we ought as friends to face together, without seeking, I trust, to apportion praise or blame, the fact that in the world of today this difference of outlook lies between us...*⁴³

In appeasing South African rulers he said :

I certainly do not believe in refusing to trade with people because you may happen to dislike the way they manage their internal affairs at home. Boycotts will never get you anywhere and may I say in parenthesis how I deprecate the attempts which are being made in Britain today to organize a consumer boycott of South African goods. It has never been the practice so far as I know of any Government in the United Kingdom, of whatever complexion, to undertake or support campaigns of this kind designed to influence the internal politics of another Commonwealth country. I and my colleagues in the UK Government deplore this proposed boycott and regard it as undesirable from every point of view. It can only have serious effects on Commonwealth relations and trade and be to the ultimate

*detriment of others than those whom it is aimed...*⁴⁴

More importantly was Macmillan's emphasis on the Cold War for this new way forward when he said :

*...As I see it the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West. Will they be drawn into the Communist Camp? Or will the great experiments of self-government that are now being made in Asia and Africa, especially within the Commonwealth, prove so successful and by their example so compelling, that the balance will come down in favour of freedom and order and justice.*⁴⁵

The South African response was immediate and prompt. Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd angrily responded by saying: "Mr Prime Minister, we have problems enough in South Africa without your coming to add to them..."⁴⁶ His Foreign Minister, E. H. Louw also in protest at the speech asked whether Macmillan would dare to criticise de Gaulle over Algerian policy or talk about races in the United States.⁴⁷ But Macmillan had driven home the point that no part of Africa could for long remain an exclusive white preserve.

The general effect of the "wind of change" speech on Macmillan was that it gave him a favourable press coverage at home and abroad. The speech was soon seen as the harbinger of change in the British African empire, a change that would be implemented, or accelerated, resulting within a short time in the end of the African colonies and their replacement by new African-dominated states. The "wind of change" speech was delivered just before Britain conceded independence to the East and Central African territories, which this chapter will shortly discuss. The bulk of the territories in these regions gained their independence between 1961 and 1964. Macmillan's speech came under criticism from some pro-empire right-wing members of his party who blamed the speech for unleashing the hurricane that would sweep across Africa in less than a decade. Lord Colyton (who as Henry Hopkinson had been a minister at the Colonial Office under Churchill and Eden) condemned it as coming "twenty-five years too early...it precipitated everything-Algeria, the Congo, etc..."⁴⁸ Even Lord Hailsham felt that "It may be that he went too far; if he had gone slower, the results in Africa might have been the same, but at least at lesser cost in human lives... but that's purely my judgement."⁴⁹ To other critics of the government's handling of colonial affairs, the speech was an act of capitulation, and was a direct inspiration in the formation of the Conservative Party's right-wing Monday Club.⁵⁰ The "Club" was to mark "Black Monday" the day Macmillan spoke in Cape Town.⁵¹ In summing up on the origins of the speech, Richie Ovendale has argued that the "wind of change" to some extent was initiated by the "profit and loss" account of 1957, and was possibly moved by the French moves in Algeria in 1958, but really began to gain momentum with the internal policy debates in Britain starting with the initial considerations of "Africa: the next ten years"⁵²

In the event, the "wind of change" speech probably had more influence in encouraging African nationalists elsewhere than in changing the South African situation. The situation there got worse because the following month witnessed the Sharpeville

massacre. Sixty-two Africans were killed at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. This marked the turning point in South Africa's international isolation. Subsequent to this incident, over a thousand Africans were detained, an assassination attempt was made on Dr Hendrik Verwoerd and the value of South African shares dropped by £650 million.⁵³ The ANC and PAC were banned, and the following year South Africa left the Commonwealth.

Since the overall policy of Macmillan's government was to preserve Britain as a great power, international considerations had to be taken into account in formulating and shaping colonial policy. One of the factors that London policy makers had to take into account after 1959 in relation to colonial policy was the actions or the activities of other European colonial powers in Africa. France, Belgium and Portugal were also coming to grips with their colonial problems, which were at times an embarrassment to British colonial policy. Macmillan was thought to have feared the risk of a bloody, draining colonial war epitomised by the Algeria quagmire. For instance in Lawrence J. Butler's words, Macmillan was personally haunted by France's experiences of confronting anti-colonial nationalism in Algeria, and was keen to avoid plunging Britain into similar, possibly unwinnable, conflicts.⁵⁴ The Portuguese refusal to even consider relinquishing her hold on her African territories drew much criticism from the international community, and Macmillan held up British policy as progressive against this intransigent attitude. The immense Belgian colony of Congo became independent on 30 June 1960 with very little preparation for the post-independence political dispensation. With the granting of independence to Congo, chaos immediately followed. In July 1960 Congolese soldiers mutinied against their Belgian officers. In the ensuing turmoil hundreds of European women were raped and some Europeans were killed in Katanga, the south-eastern province which was rich in copper and was the backbone of the Congo's economy. Katanga then declared its secession from the rest of Congo and appealed for Belgian help. The subsequent Belgian army's intervention only served to worsen the situation. The new post-independence Congolese government based in Kinshasa appealed to the UN to act against the Belgian destabilisation. The UN subsequently sent an intervention force which also failed to salvage the situation. The breakdown of law and order continued. Put in perspective, the Congo debacle, it could be argued, was a dramatic confirmation of Macmillan's "winds of change" speech. Of the fratricidal civil war that followed in the Congo, it has been argued that Macmillan feared that it would draw in the two superpowers, thus creating the risk of wider international conflict at a time of deep Cold War tensions.⁵⁵

The hectic pace with which the French colonies had reached independence made a mockery of the various approaches by the Colonial Office to the question of independence in the various territories of British Africa. Britain was now in an awkward position of defending or claiming its colonial policy as being more liberal than that of other colonial systems. It was now difficult for Britain to justify the denial of independence to British colonies whose economic and political development already outstripped that of France's former colonial territories.⁵⁶ Moreover, the prospect of a large new contingent of African states at the United Nations was an advertisement for the magnanimity of France and an implicit condemnation of British gradualness. This was

all the more unattractive as the competition for influence in the Third World seemed to be accelerating at the United Nations and Cold War politics were reaching their intensity. Especially significant was the United Nations General Assembly's adoption in 1960 of Resolution 1514, supporting speedy independence for colonial peoples, and its establishment in 1961 of a special Committee on Decolonisation.⁵⁷ Britain, having previously set the pace of decolonisation in Africa, had now been left behind by all except the Portuguese.

In decolonising East and Central Africa Britain had to deal with the issue of settler politics, which as illustrated by the Algerian problem could have serious unpalatable consequences that reverberated in the metropolitan country and threatened the political establishment there. On the one hand settler resistance could lead to unilateral decisions, as later shown by Southern Rhodesia, while on the other settler weakness could result in acquiescence as was in the case of Kenya. According to Miles Kahler, settler resistance increased as the ratio of non-European to European population decreased.⁵⁸ Throughout the history of decolonisation Europeans resident in the colonial empires were among the most vociferous and at times effective opponents of the transfer of power to African or Arab majorities.

John Darwin has argued that in East Africa the British had to deal with territories whose social and political character displayed important differences but their fates had to be settled together and along broadly similar lines.⁵⁹ Tanganyika's move towards independence was swift and did not pose too much of a hassle for the British. One of the factors attributed to this fairly easy transfer of power was the small number of European settlers which stood at 22,300 in 1960.⁶⁰ The process of decolonisation had been set in motion by the British attempt to reform local and central government in the late 1950s. Opposition to colonial rule centred around unity forged under the banner of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) led by Julius Nyerere. TANU demanded full self-government and backed this demand by a threat of demonstrations, strikes and boycotts. Britain saw the futility of using force as this would have imposed enormous strains on the resources of the colonial administration. Instead she offered constitutional talks which resulted in elections in September 1960 and were convincingly won by TANU. A further constitutional conference was held in Dar-es-Salaam in March 1961 and this paved the way for the territory's independence in December of the same year. What made Tanganyika's transition fairly smooth was the fact that Nyerere and TANU had comfortably established themselves as the country's single nationalist party and were willing to negotiate with the British.

Uganda's move towards independence was more complicated because of the ethnic question. The powerful Buganda Kingdom which had enjoyed autonomy for centuries saw any constitutional reforms towards self-government as a threat to its survival.⁶¹ The non-Buganda groups in the north and east of the country wanted a federal constitution to guard against the perceived Buganda hegemony. A compromise was agreed in September 1961 in which the Buganda Kingdom was to enjoy federal status within Uganda. It was further agreed that Uganda would achieve internal self-government on 1 March 1962 and independence was to follow in October of the same year. Just like Tanganyika, Uganda's

speedy move towards independence could partly be attributed to the small European population in the country who were not a force to be reckoned with. Crucially important for Uganda was that antagonism was not mainly between the colonial rulers and the different ethnic groups, but with the Buganda and other groups who resented the former's privileged status as likely to prove a step to total domination of other groups. On the other hand the British wanted to guard against the Buganda's secessionist tendencies as this might have resulted in anarchy. So, in Uganda it was this "unholy alliance" of interests that brought about a peaceful settlement for the territory.

Kenya was by the end of the 1950s the most advanced of British possessions in East Africa. It was the wealthiest, having the most diversified economy ; it was strategic for military purposes especially after Britain had decided to end its military facilities in the Suez area; and it had a considerable number of settlers as compared to the two territories of Tanganyika and Uganda. The number of settlers stood at 67,700 in 1960. British officials were aware that the constitutional gains made by Tanganyika and Uganda would soon have to make their way in Kenya. By the end of the 1950s the colonial government was based on some form of multiracial power-sharing in which the Africans and Europeans had an equal number of elected representatives. British officials wanted to give Kenyan colonial policy a forward-looking appearance since otherwise, their policy might be likened to that of the French, that is protecting settler interests. The Mau Mau insurrection of the 1950s had shown to the British how difficult and costly it was to put down an uprising. Suppression of the Mau Mau meant the incarceration of its leader Jomo Kenyatta. But the British did introduce certain reforms that were agrarian, commercial and market-oriented, so as to appease the Kikuyu ethnic group which was the main backbone of the Mau Mau. So, African interests became more important at the end of the 1950s and the settlers began to lose the power and privileges that they had enjoyed. The Kenya settlers were unable to resist this change of turning Kenya from a "white man's country" to a black man's.

One of the reasons for the white settlers failure in Kenya to resist change was their character. Most of them were not settler farmers in the White Highlands but town-dwellers, engaged in commerce, the professions or administration.⁶² Their composition was even more diluted after 1945 because most of those who came to Kenya were public servants who at the end of their service could still return to Britain and enjoy a government pension. So, they did not have many interests to safeguard in the colony. Also the European weakness was exposed by the Mau Mau struggle as they had to rely on the mother country's troops to quell the disturbance, so any resistance on the settlers part might encounter the full military might of London. Furthermore the whites in Kenya had displayed their weakness by failing to obtain internal self-government as the white settlers of Southern Rhodesia had done in 1923. So, when the path was launched for Kenya's self-independence in the 1960s, the odds were stark against the European settlers. Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod began Kenya's march to independence by terminating in November 1959 the emergency under which Kenya had been living since the Mau Mau outbreak in 1952, he released most of the detainees apart from Kenyatta and some of those closest to him.

In January 1960 Macleod presided over a constitutional conference on Kenya at Lancaster House in London. At the same time two modern political parties had been formed in Kenya. These were KANU (Kenya African National Union) dominated by Kikuyu and Luo politicians who regarded Kenyatta as their leader. KADU (Kenya African Democratic Union) was a loose alliance of ethnic groups who feared and resented Kikuyu power and influence. These African dominated political parties attended the London conference and alongside them was the New Kenya Group (NKG) formed by the European settler Michael Blundell and a more conservative settler group opposed to them. Blundell's aim was to break the mould of settler politics and break racial barriers through this party and to appeal to all races equally. In his opening speech to the conference, and to the dismay of the right-wing of the Conservative Party, Macleod announced that the time had come to recognise that majority rule must come to Kenya; the Africans were the majority race.⁶³ The conference produced an agreed new constitution for Kenya. The plan envisaged a council of ministers composed of four officials and eight "unofficials" of whom four were to be Africans, three Europeans and one Asian.⁶⁴ In addition there was to be a legislative council of sixty-five members elected by over a million Africans and the Europeans.

In March 1961 a general election, fought largely on the emotive issue of Kenyatta's release was held. The two African parties KANU and KADU obtained the largest share of the votes. But, Tom Mboya, leader of KANU, the more popular party, refused to take office unless Kenyatta was released. After much wrangling within the Conservative Government and Party, the decision was finally taken on 27 July 1961 to release Kenyatta. In his diary at the end of 1961 Macmillan was said to have expressed his misgivings about the way forward in Kenya. He recorded that, "If we have to give independence to Kenya, it may well prove another Congo. If we hold on, it will mean a long and cruel campaign-Mau Mau and all that."⁶⁵

In February and March 1962 yet another constitutional conference on Kenya was held in London. Under the chairmanship of Reginald Maudling (who had replaced Macleod as Colonial Secretary in October 1961), KANU and KADU were persuaded to form a coalition national government. Furthermore the two political parties were persuaded to accept a constitution which provided for a strong central government with regional governments enjoying wide autonomous powers of which the most important were control of land and the police.⁶⁶ Before long, this constitution became a bone of contention between the Kenyan political parties, especially KANU, which wanted a unitary state since although it lacked an overall majority, it had emerged as the largest single party in previous elections. The task of unravelling this East African saga now fell to Duncan Sandys who had succeeded Maudling, the latter having been promoted to being Chancellor of the Exchequer in the summer of 1962. After negotiations that entailed "give and take" deals, elections by universal suffrage were held in Kenya in May 1963 and KANU won by a landslide. In October 1963 the constitution was revised and tipped the scales in favour of central government as opposed to the regions. Independence came on 12 December 1963 with Kenyatta as the head of the post-colonial government. This completed the process of decolonisation in East Africa.

The 1958 European population figures show that Central Africa had 287,300 white settlers. Of this figure 207,000 were in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 72,000 in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) had 8,300.⁶⁷ As alluded to in chapter two, the three territories had been amalgamated into a federation in 1953, which was to serve partly as a bulwark against South Africa's discriminatory racial policies. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Macmillan's administration established the Monckton Commission in 1959 to review the future of the Federation. Its report was published in October 1959. The Commission stated that the "great majority" of Africans "expressed opposition to the Federation," and their opposition was "widespread, sincere, and of long standing," indeed in the two northern territories, "almost pathological."⁶⁸ The Commission recommended that African franchise be extended, that self-government in Northern Rhodesia should move forward and the question of secession be left open and possibly to be raised and discussed at the December 1960 Federal Constitutional review in London. While the Commission acknowledged the economic rationale behind the Federation, it still argued that it could not exist in its present form. Implicit in the Commission's recommendation was that the Federation was doomed.

Macleod had set the East African territories on the road to independence with remarkable speed and ease, but his first real test came in Central Africa where he was always at loggerheads with the settlers' leaders and the settler lobby in the Conservative Party. Macmillan had always viewed Central Africa as a potentially explosive area if not handled meticulously. He was said to have noted in his diary in February 1961 that "we may have a Boston Tea Party, Welensky declaring the Federation independent and seizing the colony of Northern Rhodesia, or an African Bloodbath, riots all over British Africa..."⁶⁹ According to Roger Louis what Macmillan feared most was an "Algeria" in Central Africa.⁷⁰ Also talking to Welensky, in early 1962, Macmillan is said to have stated the following to him :

*In Algeria the French have a million men under arms, and they have now suffered a humiliating defeat. It is too simple a reading of history to think that you can exercise control simply by the use of power.*⁷¹

In mid-1958 Hastings Banda returned to Nyasaland after a long stay abroad. He then assumed leadership of the Nyasaland African Congress. Its main objective was to secure the secession of Nyasaland from Southern Rhodesia's white dominated Federation.⁷² As a consequence of British reluctance to bring about constitutional reforms, there were widespread riots and demonstrations which culminated in the Federation's Prime Minister Roy Welensky bringing in Southern Rhodesia troops to Nyasaland to restore order. Banda and many of his supporters were arrested and were soon accused of plotting to massacre Nyasaland's whites. In the ensuing disturbances more than fifty Africans were killed. Subsequent to the Devlin Report on Nyasaland disturbances, Macmillan and his colleagues decided to take a different route from Welensky's. He later informed the latter that "I cannot guarantee, that British troops would undertake the kind of duties that would be necessary."⁷³ On 1 April 1960 Macleod released Banda from prison and invited him for talks in London. Subsequent to this, a Constitutional Conference on Nyasaland was held on 1 July 1960. The outcome was the framework of a new constitution. It provided for the direct election of Africans to the legislature with a

qualitative franchise (meaning that only Africans with a certain amount of money or education could vote).⁷⁴ But, despite protestations from Welensky, Macleod on 3 January 1961 issued an Order in Council which established a new election procedure, that is, encompassing all Africans, resulting in African majority government. In August 1961 the renamed Malawi Congress Party (MCP) won a land slide in the ensuing general election.

African opinion had been bitterly opposed to Federation in Northern Rhodesia even before its inception. But Northern Rhodesia nationalists were deeply divided and opposed to each other. Nevertheless by March 1959 there were widespread disturbances, and leading officials of the Northern Rhodesia's Congress were arrested. They were however released in January 1960 and Kenneth Kaunda set about uniting them into a new movement called the United National Independence Party (UNIP). In December 1960 Kaunda was invited to attend the federal review conference in London, pursuant upon the Monckton Commission's report. He attended on the condition that the existing Northern Rhodesian constitution would at the same time be reconsidered.⁷⁵ That precipitated the major encounter over Northern Rhodesia which spread through all of 1961 and beyond. Reconsideration of Northern Rhodesia constitution now became an issue of central importance. The Northern Rhodesia Constitutional Conference got down to business on 8 February 1961. On 14 February 1961, Macleod circulated to his cabinet colleagues a draft White Paper which if implemented would have resulted in African majority rule in Northern Rhodesia. This paper formed the basis for subsequent friction within the Cabinet and the Tory Party pertaining to Northern Rhodesia. Philip Murphy has contended that during the entire process of decolonisation, it was over the question of Northern Rhodesian constitutional reform early in 1961 that the Conservative Party came closest to splitting apart.⁷⁶ The federal review conference was aborted as the parties could not find a common ground on the issue at hand. Macleod's successor at the Colonial Office, Reginald Maudling pushed ahead with the destruction of the Federation. In February 1962 Northern Rhodesia was given the right to secede, despite Lord Home's warning that there was a danger that the Europeans "if driven too far" would take the law into their own hands and form a European-dominated association of Southern Rhodesia, the Copper Belt, Angola, Katanga and South Africa," fatal to British hopes of multiracial cooperation in Africa.⁷⁷

By the end of 1962, therefore, out of all the British colonies in Africa, only Southern Rhodesia was left as an exception to the rule of independence under black majority government. Now that South Africa had left the Commonwealth, it was the country that bore the strongest resemblance to Algeria, and for the same reason, the presence of a powerful white minority determined to preserve its privileged position. The difference, however, was that Southern Rhodesia was effectively self-governing under the constitution of 1962; the war of independence was still in the future; and when it came, it was fought by the settlers in defiance of the metropolitan country against the equivalent of the FLN, the guerrillas of ZANU and ZAPU.

d. Britain and Algeria, January 1960 to Evian 1962

As the 1960s began, therefore, Britain took keen interest, not only in events in French Africa as a whole, but in Algeria in particular. British discussion of French African colonial policy at the beginning of 1960 up to the second half of the year was not focused specifically on Algeria *per se*, but on the entire French policy in the continent, and one assumes that this impacted indirectly on the Algerian question. Ambassador Jebb writing to his boss in the Foreign Office, Selwyn Lloyd, on 2 March 1960 stated his impressions of his recent tour of French Africa. He said that de Gaulle's recent speech at Dakar on 13 December 1959 had transformed the whole situation. That, everywhere he (Jebb) travelled the relations between the French and the local politicians appeared to be excellent and chances of arriving at some satisfactory redefinition of the ties binding the States of the French community in Africa with the metropolis now appeared to be extremely good.⁷⁸ Implicit in this Jebb's thinking was that something significant was about to happen to the colonies.

Still in March 1960 de Gaulle discussed his intentions about Africa with Jebb at Rambouillet. De Gaulle stated that the various states of the French Community would gradually demand independence and he would not object,⁷⁹ though he expressed doubts that some of them were not fully-fledged states to exist or face the challenges of independence on their own. He then expressed his worries about the position of Guinea and the help which Kwame Nkrumah was giving to Sekou Touré, who was speedily slipping into the Communist camp. All this made it very important for continued Anglo-French contact about Africa.⁸⁰ The idea of such contact entered into the question of Algeria.

Contributing to the Queen's speech on 1 November 1960 the leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell referred to the Algerian subject as an international issue of some delicacy.⁸¹ He cautioned that the situation in Algeria might give rise to serious international dangers in the near future. This was made more possible by the fact that the Algerian rebel forces had made contact with and had been recognised by Russia and China.⁸² There was the likelihood that the Algerians would receive arms from these quarters. For these reasons Gaitskell contended that with all the respect Britain had for France, this was a matter that required United Nations intervention. From Gaitskell's contribution one could see that he feared the exacerbation of the East-West rivalry in the Cold War.

On 4 November 1960, the day that de Gaulle repeated his offer of self-determination for Algeria, the Algerian issue made its way once again into the House of Commons in London. On that day opposition Labour Party's Anthony Wedgwood Benn moved a motion of debate on the Algerian subject. He began by stating that the situation in Algeria was the most dangerous international situation confronting the Government or any Government throughout the whole world.⁸³ That as members of NATO and UN there could be no question about the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government in this matter. Benn went on to state a litany of misdeeds which he alleged were explicit confirmation of British collusion with France against the Algerians. Examples cited were

the British consistent voting pattern at the United Nations against resolutions on Algeria, supply of equipment such as helicopters and British acquiescence to the French claim that the Algerian problem was an internal matter that could only be solved by France alone.⁸⁴ The maverick Parliamentarian did not spare the United States which he accused of abuse of its wealth and power by providing France with substantial military aid which it then used to fight the Algerian war.⁸⁵ He blamed France for the failure of the Melun talks held in the mid-year. This he said was due to France's pandering to persistent demands of the settlers and army. Benn concluded by stating that whether the House accepted his verdict or not, it was impossible to escape the fact that it had been Western support-British, American and NATO that had enabled the French to pursue their war in Algeria.

In response the Lord Privy Seal, Edward Heath, stated that Her Majesty's Government had ties of interest and friendship in Europe and Africa, as such it could not be indifferent to the Algerian question.⁸⁶ So, the matter was of concern to the Government, but more complex than Benn had put. Heath fell short of criticising France, but instead went on to detail how the long colonial links established between France and Algeria made it difficult to disentangle the problem and that Her Majesty's Government fully understood the French dilemma. Heath referred to the settlers question which he said was one of the obstacles to finding a solution to this subject as most of them were fearful of their future.⁸⁷ And from experience, Britain knew these problems in some of her African territories, though not as desperate as those of the French. Referring to the Melun talks the Lord Privy Seal stated that Her Majesty's Government was disappointed with their failure, as they had hoped that they would lead to high level meeting between the French Government and the FLN leadership. According to Heath the disappointment was also felt in France because of the way the war was haemorrhaging France financially, morally and politically.⁸⁸ As with all other previous British official responses, this could be said to have been a carefully crafted and measured answer, attempting the impossible, that is, satisfying both the French and Algerians, and Britain appearing to be sitting on the fence. In December 1960, the Pakistani Government proposed to the British to bring about something along the "good offices" to facilitate the resolution of the Algerian question, but the British refused this suggestion.⁸⁹

As France gradually shifted towards Algerian independence the main British interest in the negotiations themselves was the fate or guarantees of the European colons or settlers in the final settlement. In January 1961 in a personal minute addressed to Foreign, Colonial and Commonwealth Secretaries, Macmillan stated that the great problem that Britain faced now in Africa, was how to guarantee the rights of European minorities once former colonial territories become independent.⁹⁰ He said that this was of particular importance since the Europeans would be the dominant economic force in those countries. The Prime Minister further stated that Britain was beginning to consider how to deal with the situations as they might arise in the Rhodesias, Kenya and even Tanganyika.⁹¹ In this regard the Prime Minister said his office had discussed issues relating to "Bill of Rights," "Supreme Courts" and "Council of State."⁹² According to Macmillan the French were in the same boat in relation to Algeria. For that matter the French had asked for information about the 1959 British settlement of Cyprus. An agreement had been entered into in February of that year between the Greek Cypriot

leader Archbishop Makarios and the governments of Britain, Greece and Turkey, under which Cyprus would become an independent republic in 1960, and Britain would retain its important bases at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.⁹³ Since an arrangement had been made for Britain and France for discussions on African problems, Macmillan said that he felt that it might be useful if Britain could propose to the French an official study of this question of European guarantees in various forms.⁹⁴ This according to him would strengthen Anglo-French cooperation in Africa. The Prime Minister hinted that he wanted to make the proposal to President de Gaulle when they meet at Rambouillet later in the month.

First to respond to the Prime Minister's minute was his Foreign Secretary Lord Home, and was not impressed by what his master thought. He suggested that the way forward in dealing with the French was one of caution. The Foreign Secretary stated that the French were very unpopular in all British Commonwealth countries in West and East Africa.⁹⁵ He expressed the fear that any leak that Britain was considering aspects of colonial policy with them would be very suspect; even if such talks were concerned with factors which would follow independence, the effect would still be bad. He suggested that the only cooperation with the French could be an exchange of information between the Embassies and also raising the matter privately with General de Gaulle, but nothing of their discussion should be leaked.⁹⁶ The Foreign Secretary further expressed his scepticism about any special safeguards for the settlers, in his view such guarantees did not hold as was illustrated by Ghana once Britain had departed.

In response the Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod said that he would be glad if some of the information on British colonies such as the Cabinet Committee information on Land Tenure in Kenya could be shared with the French.⁹⁷ Britain had in the early 1960s, hand in hand with constitutional reforms, bought thousands of acres of land in the lucrative White Highlands, for redistribution among African farmers. Possibly, the aim was to create a flourishing class that would engage in farming on a large scale. As his colleague in the Foreign Office, Macleod said he foresaw some danger in offering to join the French in an official study of this question of European minorities. In Macleod's view if this was done and became public knowledge, it would be damaging to British interests in the colonies and the independent states in Africa as it would be interpreted as support for the colons.⁹⁸ The Colonial Secretary further stated that already African nationalist leaders had the belief that Britain was sympathising with the French in their Algerian policy and this perception had done Britain some harm.⁹⁹ The Commonwealth Secretary agreed with his two cabinet colleagues on the need for caution. He suggested that the transference of power should be gradual and undertaken by carefully calculated stages, possibly announced in advance.¹⁰⁰ This correspondence within Whitehall shows that there was no clear policy on the way forward on colonial matters.

After these discussions in Whitehall, Philip de Zulueta prepared a position paper on the subject. The gist of this was that there was general advantage in carrying out discussions with the French about protecting European settlers in Africa as this would be to encourage a feeling of Anglo-French solidarity, at least in the minds of General de Gaulle and his closest collaborators.¹⁰¹ It was felt that the two colonial powers might be able to contribute useful ideas to each other though conditions in various territories differed

widely. It was hoped by the British that if the French could be led in this way into discussing their policy in Algeria, Britain might be able to exercise some influence on its development. This shows that Britain had some concerns about the Algerian question, but did not want to go public as this might sour relations between the two colonial powers. It was finally decided by Whitehall that the Prime Minister was to raise the subject with de Gaulle when they meet at Rambouillet. The two political leaders met at Rambouillet on 28 January 1961. On the question of Africa they agreed that it might be useful for experts from the two countries to consider whether there were any possibilities of arranging effective guarantees for the rights of white minorities in former colonies.¹⁰² This Project seems to have disappeared into the air as no joint study or result was produced.

At the beginning of March 1962, as there were signs that the French and Algerians were getting nearer to the settlement, discussions began within Whitehall as to what response Her Majesty's Government was to make should such prospect come to fruition. Downing Street thinking revealed some disagreement on the way forward. The Paris Embassy had suggested to the Foreign Office that a Ministerial statement should be made to welcome any settlement. The Foreign Office seemed to have been warming towards the Paris Mission's idea and even went further by suggesting that the Prime Minister should also send a personal message to de Gaulle.¹⁰³ When this suggestion was put before the Prime Minister he was not impressed. In a minute to the Foreign Secretary he expressed his doubts about the idea and even seemed to be irritated by it. He stated the following:

*Do you think it really wise for Her Majesty's Government to make any statement at all in either House? Is it not intolerably patronising? Did other countries make approving statements when we lost Ireland or India? Please consider. As for a message from me to de Gaulle, I think he would resent it. Perhaps I might write him a letter on some occasion in which I would refer to Algeria.*¹⁰⁴

After this Prime Ministerial intervention the idea of making a ministerial statement was abandoned.

As the GPRA and the French moved closer to negotiations and the OAS intensified its propaganda and terror campaigns, the British were not spared. On 5 March 1962, the OAS informed some British and American journalists that they would be told to leave Algeria if the Secret Army thought their reporting of its activities were "unfriendly."¹⁰⁵ Earlier on, eleven Italian journalists had to flee Algiers after threats to their lives by Europeans claiming to be an "OAS Commando."¹⁰⁶ In its editorial on 9 March 1962 the *Daily Telegraph*, though it expressed cautious optimism that a solution to the Algerian question was in sight, argued that the OAS posed a serious threat to any agreement and had to be nipped in the bud.¹⁰⁷ Britain noted with little concern the formation of the National Council of the French Resistance in Algeria (CNRFA) by the OAS on 13 March 1962. This was the last ditch attempt by the organisation to derail the negotiation process. The CNRFA was under the presidency of ex-General Salan, its aim was the deposition of General de Gaulle and his replacement by General Salan with a mandate to restore the sovereignty of the French people under the 1958 constitution. Though this was an open call to rebellion and mutiny, London thought and believed that de Gaulle

would prevail as the Army would remain loyal,¹⁰⁸ a further endorsement of confidence in de Gaulle by Britain.

After the collapse of the Melun talks in June 1960, discussion between Whitehall and the Foreign Office over the possible prospects for an Algerian settlement hinged on an assessment of the French government's capacity to impose it, de Gaulle's ability to carry French public opinion with him to do so, and the likelihood of an Algerian partition establishing settler enclaves within the northern coastal cities.¹⁰⁹

As far as the settlement of the war in Algeria was concerned, when the Evian accords were eventually signed in March 1962, the British authorities regarded it as a diplomatic triumph for General de Gaulle and his team.¹¹⁰ British government sources at this climax of the Algerian situation recapitulate the terms of the Agreements basically for the official British records. London was mainly interested in seeing what the French got out of this, compared with similar agreements by Britain. Macmillan immediately when hearing of the signing of the accords requested P.F. de Zulueta to prepare a note setting out briefly what the French had got out of the Algerian agreement.¹¹¹ Whitehall's feelings was that the French had done rather well out of all this.

In his note for the record, Philip de Zulueta stated the following:

It appeared that the French had got the Naval base for another fifteen years and exploitation rights in the Sahara for a further six years. This contrasted strongly with what we got out of our Colonies when we turned them into independent countries. I suggested to the Prime Minister that this was not for want of trying on our part; for example, we had a defence agreement with Nigeria when they became independent (1960), but we gave it up after about a year because they wanted us to. The Prime Minister recognised that the French had a stronger will to stay on for example, in Bizerta, but he thought it would be useful in, say, our discussions with Kenya, if we could quote the French settlement with the Algerians.¹¹²

From these remarks of de Zulueta it does appear that the British officials were envious of the French gains. The mention of Kenya illustrates that developments in Algeria were having a wider indirect impact on British thinking in East Africa and possibly other areas.

From Paris, Sir Pierson Dixon (British Ambassador to Paris 1960-64) commented on the accords by saying:

Many of the agreement's provisions for example, over military bases and guarantees for European settlers-are much better than could at one time have been expected and have only been wrung from the Algerians after a great deal of bargaining. Indeed, in agreeing to allow France to retain the use of her nuclear testing ground, the GPRA did so in full knowledge that they would be likely to incur the odium of their fellow Afro-Asians.¹¹³

Dixon went further and stated that:

It is possible that the GPRA were forced to make these concessions through fear of partition and it may well be that extremer elements

*among the Algerian nationalists have agreed to this settlement with the mental reservation that they could go back on their word when they have achieved complete independence.*¹¹⁴

Dixon concluded his report on a more pessimistic and ominous note by stating that:

*The main obstacle to the application of the agreement was the OAS who would presumably continue to sabotage it with every means at their disposal. The French authorities, however, are cautiously optimistic that the favourable terms of the agreement would cause European support for the OAS to fall away. But for the immediate future it is hard to foresee anything but a period of continuing bloodshed.*¹¹⁵

The military aspects of the Evian accords in a broader context are a reflection of the overall French defence policies in Africa during decolonisation, and these were in contrast with those of Great Britain. France maintained bases in Africa and used them from time to time, whereas Britain did not bother much about these military agreements. In addition, France wanted her former colonies to be in some kind of military dependence, which was in contrast to what Britain stood for, for instance, London was not prepared to go to war in Southern Rhodesia over the question of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).

In a letter to General de Gaulle on 20 March 1962, Macmillan expressed feelings of gratitude to him on the successful conclusion of the Algerian settlement. He stated that since the end of the war, both Britain and France had had to face great changes in the structure of their influence in many parts of the world. And, lastly, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that the good work done by Britain and France in spreading civilisation might soon bore fruit.¹¹⁶

The *Daily Telegraph* editorial comment of 19 March 1962, welcomed the agreement and referred to it as an incredible feat.¹¹⁷ But it qualified the praise by stating that there were still obstacles to genuine peace as the OAS and their supporters of "*Algerie française*" were still a threat. This threat it argued could only be overcome by the loyalty of the French Army not being in doubt and its willingness to contain the violence of the OAS. The *Telegraph* concluded by appealing to the European settlers not to despair as a result of the agreement, but to draw comfort from safeguards provided for them, which the paper said were substantial. Also the settlers could have hope from the fact that both parties at Evian had agreed that "cooperation was the solution which best corresponded with the interests of Algeria and France."

f. Conclusion

The 1960s were a watershed for both British and French colonial policies in Africa. In the case of France, most of her French Black Africa territories were decolonised in 1960. This marked the end of the "Community" in its original conception. France now entered into a new relationship with her former colonies. This relationship was cemented through a variety of treaties and agreements with the individual states. At the same time in the 1960s there was a dramatic shift in the pace of constitutional reforms in most of British

possessions in East and Central Africa. The territories in these regions were set on an irreversible path of self-government. But throughout this process the European population in these areas played a critical role in trying to delay, stall or even derail this process of change.

Civil-military relations determined the course of the resolution of the Algerian problem. The termination of the war not only was a relief for the direct belligerents, but for the Western world especially Britain and the United States, as their NATO ally (France) had now become an embarrassment to them in the United Nations, as it constantly faced a barrage of attacks from Third World countries and the Eastern bloc. After the referendum and army revolt in 1961, de Gaulle opened negotiations with the GPRA, that dragged on and off for over a year before the Evian accords were finally agreed. Because of the length of time involved, and the various proposals put forward by the French, de Gaulle has been accused of vacillation. Offering an American perspective on the war. Irwin Wall has gone so far so far as to suggest that the credit and praise often heaped on de Gaulle was misplaced, as he was part of the problem, by prolonging and perpetuating the war. The truth of the matter is probably that having accepted the principle of Algerian self-determination, and hence Algerian independence, he was presured on the one hand by the need to safeguard French interests, including those of the settler population, and on the other by OAS terrorism, which obliged him to fight a war on two fronts-against the FLN and the Europeans-and hence to reach a solution as quickly as possible. In the process, GPRA intransigence compelled him to abandon the attempt to construct a coalition in which the FLN would be only a partner, and concede the right of the FLN to form the government of an independent Algeria. Developments in Algeria and France were keenly watched by British officials, and what lessons could be learned from there for purposes of their (British) colonial questions. Britain and France took a leaf out of one another's book in dealing with the decolonisation of their African possessions. Though the Evian accords officially ended the Algerian war, achieving peace was a different matter altogether, many problems were still to come to engulf this newly born and independent nation. It is to post-independence Algeria and the attendant problems that the next chapter focuses on.

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CHAPTER 8

ALGERIAN INDEPENDENCE, 1962 TO 1965

a. Introduction

With the achievement of Algerian independence in 1962, the problem changed from the need of the FLN to win the war, and the need of France, Britain and America to bring it to an end, to the need of the FLN to form a government of the newly-independent nation, and the need of France, Britain, and the rest of the world to relate to that government. The solution depended on the character of the new nation, which was defined by the Evian accords on the basis of residence in the country, as the European together with the Muslim population of Algeria, but which was immediately altered by the flight of the great majority of the European population, leaving the new nation almost entirely Muslim. On the one hand, that freed the FLN from the need to compromise; on the other, it limited the possibility of economic and therefore political independence. Between 1962 and 1966, these factors governed the British attitude to Algeria. The fact that Her Majesty's Government regarded the Algerian affair as effectively settled was also reflected in this period by the consular reports which took over from memoranda in terms of reporting on Algeria.

b. Ben Bella to Boumedienne

As mentioned earlier on, the Soummam Valley Congress of 1956 sought to clarify the objectives of the Algerian revolution. It affirmed the primacy of the political over the military, and the internal over the external. Contrary to this, in the course of the war, the external had taken priority over the internal, and within the external, the military in Tunisia and Morocco were the largest element, while the political was divided over policy and between personalities. In the contest for leadership in 1962, Ben Bella came to power with the support of the army under Houari Boumedienne, driving his opponents into exile, rebellion, or to death. This now meant that Ben Bella and his regime could do as they pleased in governing.

Following a national referendum on 8 September 1962, most of Ben Bella's constitutional proposals became law. He was elected the first President with an overwhelming majority; this was a foregone conclusion as no other candidates were permitted to stand. This gave him unfettered freedom in establishing a presidential regime which he believed was the most effective way of ensuring his own authority. He increased his powers by assuming the offices of president, prime minister and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.¹ In the course of his presidency, his office assumed direct control over the Prefects, the police, media, finance and planning which were the main organs of the state. Ben Bella set up a one party state with the FLN

formed into the sole permitted political body, and the principal policy-making body. Institutions of government were heavily weighted toward the executive branch while the National Assembly essentially became a rubber-stamp body.

Algeria under Ben Bella was declared a socialist state. Socialism was the guiding ideology, mainly in state management of abandoned European estates. For instance, the March 1963 Decrees created a legal definition of vacant property, established a detailed system of self-management to be applied to all such properties, and provided for a system of profit sharing within each enterprise.² Algeria conceived of her revolution, whatever its Marxist overtones, as an indigenous product, African, Arab, Islamic and above all Algerian. Arabic was declared the language of the republic, though French was to be retained provisionally; Islam was defined as the religion of the state.³ Algeria saw herself as out in front of the *avant-garde* of the Third World, but not as leading it into the Communist camp. Ben Bella's Algeria conducted her foreign policy with grandiloquence. She displayed unblushingly her wish to cut a dash internationally and waved the banner of "liberation." Algeria became more than ever home from home for fellow-travelling conferences and exiles.⁴ Algeria had in 1964 agreed to host the expensive Afro-Asian conference the following year. During the Congo crisis of 1964 she assumed a vocal and aggressive stance.

By 1965 only two people still wielded power apart from Ben Bella. They were Boumedienne, Vice-President and Minister of National Defence and the youthful Abdelaziz Bouteflika as Foreign Minister (now President). These two were also allies. In the build up to the Afro-Asian conference in June 1965, there were persistent rumours to the effect that Ben Bella wanted to sack the foreign minister and after the conference dismiss Boumedienne and create a government of national unity in which sidelined leaders of the revolution such as Ben Khedda, Mohamed Khider and Ait Ahmed would be co-opted. It does appear that Boumedienne was persuaded to act swiftly by his closest ally Bouteflika before Ben Bella could get at them.

The coup took place in the early hours of 19 June 1965 with the arrest of Ben Bella and his inner circle of allies. The Algerian nation was informed that the Revolutionary Council under colonel Houari Boumedienne had taken control of the reins of power. A proclamation from the Revolutionary Council lambasted Ben Bella's rule on many fronts. He was denounced as a dictator, having a pathological love for power, at the heart of Algeria's social, economic and political maladies such as mismanagement of national resources, political instability and rampant unemployment. The proclamation went further and stated how Boumedienne and the Revolutionary Council intended to run the country, that is, devoting itself to setting in order and improving the country's economy. The removal of Ben Bella by Boumedienne meant the assertion of the primacy of the military over the political.

c. France and Algeria, 1962 to 1965

One of the provisions of the Evian agreement was that there should be a transitional

period which would end with the holding of the referendum in not less than three months. As stated in the previous chapter that, the OAS intensified its terrorist attacks on the eve and immediately after the signing of the Evian Accords. These barbaric acts were in the form of indiscriminate killing of both European settlers and Muslims, robbing of banks, attacks on hospitals in which patients were killed, sabotage of oil-pipelines, massacre of Muslim dockers waiting for work, abduction of Europeans and the arson attacks on schools in Algiers.⁵ At the same time, the French security forces intensified the rounding up of OAS leaders. First was the arrest of ex-General Edmond Jouhaud in Oran on 25 March 1962.⁶ He was tried and sentenced to death but was later reprieved. Then on 20 April 1962 was the arrest of ex-General Raoul Salan, head of the OAS. He was convicted of treason and sentenced to life imprisonment as the high military tribunal said they had found "extenuating circumstances" in the case.⁷

As OAS subversive acts escalated, there was at the same time the mass departures of most European settlers to France. These were mainly entrepreneurs managers, engineers, teachers, professors, doctors, dentists, technicians, highly skilled workers and the most experienced administrators and clerks.⁸ As Algeria moved close to independence, these departures reached panic proportions. At the signing of the Evian accords, it was estimated that there were a million settlers or colons in Algeria and it was anticipated that two-thirds of these would remain in Algeria. But between March 1962 and independence in July that year well over 800,000 settlers had left and this exodus rendered the special status provided for the settlers under the Evian accords ineffective. This mass departure of the valuable European personnel would later have an adverse effect on the economic development of this newly born nation as it endeavoured to chart its destiny. Too late to have any effect on the outcome, the sad chapter of FLN-OAS rivalry was brought to a close by the signing of a truce between the two on 17 June 1962.

The relationship between France and Algeria from 1962 to 1965 could be summed up as one of independence with interdependence. Continued economic dependence on France limited the regime's freedom of action. Algeria's leaders' public utterances against France did not correspond with their dealings with France in practice. For France, the interdependence was primarily political as Algeria retained a crucial strategic importance, especially concerning Third World relations, complementing French foreign policy pursuits of greatness (*grandeur*) and independence.⁹ For Algeria, its inevitable reliance upon France for its social and economic needs, as exemplified by a series of cooperation programmes, restricted its assertion of its sovereignty and its revolutionary identity. By way of comparison and contrast, whereas the United States isolated Cuba after her revolution and this enabled her to go ahead in exporting her revolutionary ideas, Algeria remained closely tied to France and this limited whatever revolutionary rhetoric and aspirations that Algeria desired to spread throughout the third world. In other words, Algeria's dependence on French aid had an effect on the course of the politics of the regime and meant that Algeria was kept in check within the orbit of the Western alliance. French-Algerian cooperation programmes covered the military, financial, commercial, cultural, technical and hydrocarbons aspects. Added to this, was a wave of Algerian economic immigration into France, making the relationship between the two countries even closer.

As French troops began to withdraw in accordance with the time-table set by the Evian Agreement, they converged from the south of the country on three points : Oran, Algiers and Constantine; from these they were to disembark for France. Although they took their arms with them they left behind them many tons of varied equipment. They left vehicles and workshops in good order, and barracks fully equipped even down to the bedding.¹⁰ The handing-over process was the beginning of Franco-Algerian co-operation in the military field. Furthermore, in order to improve relations, the French government accommodated Algeria's most desired objective, a revision of the Evian Accords' military clauses. By an agreement signed on 2 May 1963, the French promised to accelerate the evacuation of French troops. Troop withdrawals, other than those at leased bases, were implemented about eight months ahead of schedule. This pleased Ben Bella since it presented "a new dimension" promoting "a fruitful and stable cooperation."¹¹

Another field in which France continued to play the major role in Algeria was the provision of financial assistance. The Evian Accords had stipulated the continuation of massive French financial assistance toward Algerian development. An agreement was signed between the two countries on 26 June 1963 in which France provided an annual package of 800 million french francs, divided between free aid and tied aid.¹² Free aid was transferred to the development fund of the Algerian treasury. This aid could be allocated as Algerians wished. Tied aid made, like free aid, in the form of grants was directed towards realising the projects of the Constantine Plan.¹³ By the end of 1963 public financial assistance by France to Algeria alone amounted to 1,368 million francs. This meant that Algeria alone accounted for 52 per cent of all French aid to underdeveloped countries.¹⁴ French loans provided to Algeria were long-term, more than ten years. France also permitted Algeria to have "treasury advances" which funnelled francs to Algeria in order to stabilise the deteriorating financial situation.¹⁵ In the process Algeria accumulated a debt of over a billion francs.¹⁶ This financial cooperation brought one stark fact into the open, that Algeria's dependence upon France was inextricable. From the Algerian perspective, the Evian financial aid package protected French interests, inhibited Algeria's exercise of its socialist option, and hampered its efforts of economic diversification.

The economy of Algeria was tied to France in various ways. After independence, especially because of the exodus of the colons with much of their capital, Algeria was less able to be independent economically than ever before. Now cooperation was extended to the commercial field. This was achieved by several commercial accords between end of 1963 to the end of 1964. For instance, on 18 January 1964 the two countries concluded a commercial agreement that preset, for the period 1964 to 1968, French importation at 33.8 million hectolitres of Algerian wine.¹⁷ By 1964, France received 73 per cent of Algeria's exports while 70 per cent of Algeria's total imports arrived from France.¹⁸ Bearing in mind the disproportionate size of the two economies, it is clear that the exports-imports ratio was skewed in favour of France.

Even more important than the material aid that France gave Algeria, however, was her invaluable assistance in providing trained personnel. In 1964, there was a proportion of

Frenchmen in the upper ranks of the Algerian civil service and they formed 43 per cent in the administrative grade (Grade A) and 77 per cent in the senior Executive grade (Grade B).¹⁹ France also sent over 15,000 teachers, and the Algerians would definitely have welcomed several thousand more.²⁰ Towards the end of 1964, France and Algeria defined a new direction for cultural and technical cooperation. It was agreed that the Algerian cadres would be developed to ensure "Algerianization" of all sectors; education and technical training would become priorities.²¹ However, there were other areas in which French-Algerian technical cooperation was seriously wanting and did not bring the desired effect. For instance, in the sphere of medicine almost all the 1,800 trained European doctors had left and Algeria was forced to depend heavily on forty-six doctors from Bulgaria, who put a strain in the country's finances as the Government had to pay their salaries.²²

In addition, France and Algeria cooperated in the area of hydrocarbons production. One of the French gains at Evian was the concessions of the French petroleum companies whose discoveries and subsequent production freed France from an overdependence on Anglo-American hydrocarbon purchases.²³ Once the French companies' position was secured and entrenched in Algeria, they continued to expand production. France's *de facto* control of the Saharan hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas) fields improved France's overall balance of payments, enhanced her competitive position, provided economic security, promoted modernisation, and above all projected greatness (*grandeur*) and independence. With France increasingly importing hydrocarbons and Algeria still dependent upon a wide array of French commodities and durable goods, trade in the short term remained interdependent and relatively balanced.

d. Britain and Africa, 1962 to 1965

The period from 1962 to 1965 was crucial for Britain in Africa, as she wound up most of her African colonial commitments in the potential trouble spots, with the exception of Southern Rhodesia. During the same period and beyond, British relations with her former colonies were transformed into those of "equal" partners under the umbrella of the Commonwealth. This section of the discussion looks at the aforementioned period and the international standing of Britain at the end of this period. In March 1962, Macmillan created a new department which was now responsible for all Central African Affairs. The responsibility of heading this new creation fell to R.A. Butler. Soon afterwards, Nyasaland's right of secession was virtually accepted in May 1962. A further Lancaster House conference for Nyasaland was held in November 1962, which decided that Nyasaland should attain internal self-government. The following month Britain conceded that Nyasaland might secede from the Federation and this was officially confirmed to the House of Commons on 19 December 1962.

Acceleration to the break-up of the Federation reached its peak in March 1963, when in a meeting in London between Butler and Welensky, the former read to the latter a chilling draft statement to the effect that, "any Territory must be allowed to secede if it so wishes."²⁴ Welensky protested against this by refusing to go on to lunch with Macmillan at 10 Downing Street. To these moves of dissolving the Federation Welensky

complained that :

*The most hopeful and constructive experiment in racial partnership that Africa has seen in our time has been wantonly destroyed by the Government which only ten years earlier gave its impetus....Harold Macmillan's mind was the most complicated I have encountered in my political life.*²⁵

Anthony Sampson has argued that Macmillan's operation in decolonising Central Africa or dissolving the Federation, resembled in miniature de Gaulle's operation in Algiers; both leaders were put into power by their right wing, and then turned against it.²⁶

Meanwhile, on 25 May 1963 representatives of thirty-two African governments signed an agreement in Addis Ababa to establish an Organisation of African Unity (OAU), thus partly fulfilling the realisation of the Pan-African ideal championed by leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah. Article II of the OAU Charter proclaimed among the purposes of the OAU "to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa."²⁷ At the General Assembly of the United Nations and in the Special Committee on Decolonisation, which was established in 1961, it was hoped that the African group could exercise some influence by virtue of their numbers unrelated to the strength of individual countries. In July 1963 the OAU established a Co-ordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, which acknowledged that Britain, France and Spain had already recognised the right of colonial self-determination, even though diplomatic pressure might be required to expedite its implementation.²⁸ At the same time, in the summer (June-July) of 1963 at a conference held at Victoria Falls, the Federation's resources and assets were divided among its three components. This was a clear indication that the Federation's days were numbered. Nyasaland (Malawi) finally became independent in July 1964 with Hastings Banda as president.

Though Welensky could let Nyasaland leave the Federation with no qualms, he made his last stand by fighting fiercely for the retention of Northern Rhodesia in the Federation. Not only was Northern Rhodesia important for its sizeable white population but more importantly because of its rich copper belt, which was vital for the Federation's economic prosperity. Sometime in the course of 1962 some marginal changes were announced to the new constitution for Northern Rhodesia that did contain the possibility of African majority rule. In October 1962 elections were held in Northern Rhodesia and resulted in a coalition government of UNIP and ANC of Kenneth Kaunda and Harry Nkambula respectively.²⁹ On 28 March 1963, Britain acceded to the Kaunda-Nkambula coalition request for Northern Rhodesia to secede from the Federation. The Federation finally collapsed in December 1963. After further elections in 1964, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) became independent in October 1964 with Kaunda as president. Britain concluded the decolonisation of her African colonial territories by conceding independence to the Gambia (West Africa) in 1965, Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Basutoland (Lesotho) in 1966, Swaziland and Mauritius in 1968. By the end of 1968 the bulk of British possessions in South-Central Africa were independent. Apart from the Portuguese colonies that were left in the region, and the separate issue of South Africa, only Southern Rhodesia remained an issue.

Developments north of the Zambezi worried Southern Rhodesia settlers and the white supremacist Rhodesia Front campaigned on a platform of separate independence for Southern Rhodesia. On 11 May 1962, the seventeen-nation United Nations Committee on Colonialism endorsed a report (with representatives of Britain, USA, Australia and Italy dissenting) that the position in Southern Rhodesia was grave and there was a danger of serious conflict if the existing constitution was maintained in the face of "total African opposition."³⁰ In the elections held in October 1962, the Rhodesia Front led by Winston Field won. At the time when Butler was in charge of Central African Affairs and his main focus was on disentangling the Northern Rhodesia problem, his efforts were complicated in the spring of 1963 by the Southern Rhodesia Prime Minister, Winston Field as he demanded independence for that territory. African leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Milton Obote of Uganda are said to have told Macmillan that they would leave the Commonwealth if London allowed independence to Southern Rhodesia.³¹ This threat was made, no doubt, because of the flaws in the territory's constitution, which did not contain enough safeguards for the African majority. In the meanwhile, in August 1963 the main nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia, ZAPU split. A group led by Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole founded the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). At issue was disagreement over ideology and strategy, compounded by personal and factional rivalry. Of significance was that ZANU came to be dominated mainly by people of Shona origin whereas ZAPU became identified with those of Ndebele stock.

At the end of 1963 when the Federation officially collapsed, Welensky retired from front line politics. In April 1964, Field, judged by many supporters to have lost a golden opportunity to secure independence at the dissolution of the Federation, was ousted from the leadership of the Rhodesia Front in favour of the hard-liner, Ian Douglas Smith who regarded Southern Rhodesia as his birthright. Under Smith's leadership the Rhodesia Front demanded independence along the same lines accorded Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. He also embarked upon draconian measures that were aimed at stifling the African nationalist movements opposition to his regime. These included the banning of ZANU and ZAPU, and a crackdown on the media. Smith further strengthened his grip on power by appointing a loyal commander as head of the army and called a general election at which most of the white voters overwhelmingly endorsed his uncompromising stance on independence.³² A succession of British Prime Ministers refused to accede to Smith's demand unless tangible concessions were made to African demands.

When the Labour Party came back into office under Harold Wilson in October 1964, he attempted a negotiated settlement but to no avail. On 11 November 1965 Ian Smith proclaimed Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) which in effect was rebellion against London. This set the stage for a fifteen year long armed struggle between Smith's minority government and the African nationalists. The customary Lancaster House Conference held at the end of 1979 reached a compromise settlement. The final resolution of the problem was in April 1980 when Smith agreed to black majority rule after a general election which was won by Robert Mugabe's ZANU. The country was renamed Zimbabwe.

Once Britain had concluded the decolonisation process of her African dependencies in the 1960s, she now established a "special" relationship through the Commonwealth with former members of her vast empire. The Commonwealth since its foundation in the late 1920s has undergone tremendous changes and transformations in terms of meaning and composition. Until 1965 the Commonwealth constituted a special "club" within the empire. Becoming a "member of the Commonwealth" was a badge of independence.³³ After 1965, with the creation of the Secretariat, the Commonwealth was transformed into a multilateral association, which soon achieved a momentum of its own. The year 1965 has been characterised as the watershed in the evolution of the modern Commonwealth.³⁴ The issue of Southern Rhodesia which failed to be resolved in the 1960s became one of the most contentious problems that the post-1965 Commonwealth had to deal with. African governments, and their supporters inside the Commonwealth, demanded that Britain should exercise her sovereignty in bringing the Southern Rhodesia rebellion to an end, but without success. Despite the ups and downs in the life of the Commonwealth, it has been resilient, and up to this day it still remains the forum in which Britain and her former colonies gather together to discuss a variety of issues of mutual interest.

e. Britain and Algeria, 1962 to 1965

The Salan verdict referred to earlier on, angered President de Gaulle and his government. He saw the judgement as a condemnation of his Algerian policy and an attempt to understand the attitude of Army elements who still clung to the out-dated notion of *Algerie-francaise*. Commenting on the Salan verdict the British broadsheet newspaper the *Daily Telegraph* said the result was one of simple incredulity.³⁵ The paper wondered how the same military tribunal that sentenced Jouhaud to death on the same charges to Salan could arrive at a different verdict in the latter's case. Once again double-standards had been displayed by the French judiciary and its impartiality questioned. (De Gaulle's anger finally led to the dissolution of the High Military Tribunal and replaced it with an all-special court which was to carry out swift and summary justice on captured Secret Army killers).³⁶

From the birth of Algeria as an independent State, Britain watched the political and economic developments in the huge North African territory with much interest. When General de Gaulle proclaimed the independence of Algeria in July 1962, it was also immediately recognised by Her Majesty's Government. On 1 October 1962, Britain formally established diplomatic relations with Algeria through the appointment of Her Majesty's Charge d' Affaires.³⁷ November 1, 1954 the outbreak of the revolution was commemorated as a National Day from 1 November 1962. Foreign delegations including Sir Roger Stevens of the Foreign Office representing Her Majesty's Government attended the celebrations. Notes for the brief for Sir Roger Stevens at the celebrations give a hint at what British officials thought of the newly independent Algerian government.³⁸ British thinking was that the first principle of Algerian foreign policy was to take a lead in the emancipation of dependent peoples, particularly in Africa.³⁹ Britain was worried by the Algerian leaders tendency to speak of Southern Rhodesia in the same breath as South Africa and Angola.⁴⁰ This, the British viewed as ignorance on the part of Algerians,

arguing that there was a basic difference between the aims of Her Majesty's Government and those of the South African and Portuguese governments. London added that the Algerians had to be reminded that South Africa had an independent government outside the Commonwealth.⁴¹ In other words South Africa was not a colony in which Britain had responsibilities.

The brief also stated another worrisome factor, which was the close relationship that Algeria was developing with communist or revolutionary Cuba, while at the same time the Algerian attitude towards the Americans was becoming negative as shown by recent press coverage. But in the case of Britain the coverage was favourable. The brief cautioned that Britain must not express any kind of support for the Americans as this would only result in the souring of relations between London and Algiers. This fact is interesting, since during the war there had been an Anglo-American front intended to ensure that an independent Algerian did not go Communist or make trouble in Africa. It now appears that Britain was willing to wink at poor relations with America over Cuba, if this could help Great Britain in Africa. Furthermore, the brief stated that although there was a qualified respect for the Evian Agreements by Algerian government policy, there were by and large Algerian government servants who as a result of their "war" experiences and of the OAS terror still bore bitterness and suspicion towards the French, and were thus not keen to carry out the agreements. Also Stevens was advised not to mention anything relating to NATO as the word was dirty in the Algerian vocabulary; the Algerians were distrustful of the organisation. Algerians had during the war believed that NATO was supplying France with the ammunition to prosecute the war. Finally, Sir Roger Stevens was to convey to the Algerians that Her Majesty's Government wished to develop normal relationship that friendly adult nations enjoy, on a footing of sovereign equality and respect for each other's legitimate interests.⁴² It can be deduced from the above that, Britain was walking a tightrope, that is trying to draw a fine line in her relations with the newly independent Algeria.

The background to this diplomatic approach was filled in in the annual review of the situation in Algeria for 1962, which gave on the whole an encouraging assessment of the economic and political situation in the country. The British annual report on Algeria stated that though the Ben Bella regime had a shaky start it was now beginning to assert its authority. On Ben Bella himself the report stated that he had increased in stature, had many qualities, one of which was his popular appeal, and another his pragmatic approach to most problems, which served him well. He had also created some stability in the whole country. In British views, they hoped that Ben Bella and his team would be able in the coming months to maintain the progress already made.⁴³ According to British officials one of the darker sides of Algeria was the one party system she had adopted, since it was likely to lead to dictatorship. The report went further to state that the FLN had proved its worth as a fighting machine during the war, but with the return of peace had revealed its deficiencies and was virtually non-existent inside Algeria. The consequence of this was that from the beginning Ben Bella had to rely on the Army. The political foundation for democracy was lacking.

On the mass exodus of some 800,000 Europeans, the 1962 annual review stated that this

meant that the Algeria of the Evian agreement was no longer feasible. The French departures had left unattended some 800,000 hectares of land, and 850 factories closed out of a total of 2,500. It was also estimated that only some 12,000 European managers and factory owners were now left out of 45,000. Unoccupied farms were declared "*biens vacants*" and were handed over to Management Committees. Ploughing was undertaken as a crash operation by the Ministry of Agriculture. At the same time the management of these properties which had been intended as a first step in agrarian reform at the time of the Evian Accords was proving impossible owing to the departure of the Europeans farmers, which had forced the hand of the authorities. In the industrial sector, according to the annual review, results had proved even more difficult to achieve, lack of credit facilities, shortage of managerial and technical staff and shrinking markets had all been largely responsible for the negative results. A gloomy economic picture of Algeria was thus presented by British officials in relation to economic matters.

In the field of foreign affairs, the British assessment of Algeria was that her foreign policy was one of non-alignment in the East/West relations, which included the following elements: continuation of the struggle against colonialism, strengthening of Algeria's links with the non-committed nations, the development of its relations with the socialist countries and the widening of its relationships with the Western countries, particularly France. Measured in terms of aid received, the results of this policy had been satisfactory. Algeria had since independence been kept going by budgetary aid from France, emergency relief in the form of food and clothing from the United States and a variety of aid, technical, material and financial from many sources. In the Arab world, according to the review, Algeria had as expected built some sort of special relationship with Nasser's Egypt, although they appeared to have resisted the temptation of taking sides in Arab squabbles. Her relations with her immediate neighbours had been bad or indifferent. In Africa, support for anti-colonialist movements had by the end of 1962 not had time to get fully under way. What was more encouraging for British mandarins was the fact that the Algerians were not antagonistic or unfriendly towards Britain or Her Majesty's Government, though they said they (Algerian) had not forgotten what they regarded as Britain's blind support for the French Government over the Algerian issue. So, 1962 was not only the year of independence, but was also the year of truth in the evolution of Algeria. In other terms, the British annual report was giving a mixed picture of the situation in Algeria albeit encouraging.

According to a report on the political and economic conditions in Algeria prepared for the Federation of British Industries by the *The Economist Intelligence Unit* in June 1963, Ben Bella's closest Algerian political associate was colonel Houari Boumedienne, the Minister of Defence and leader of the ALN ; the latter was a shy man, without personal ambition (how ironic?) and the regime's loyal supporter rather than its "*eminence grise*."⁴⁴ The year (1963) saw the signing of a number of satisfactory international agreements, mostly involving aid in some form or other with Yugoslavia, Egypt, Kuwait, United States, Soviet Union, China and on a more modest scale with the United Kingdom. Official and political relations with France were still governed by the Evian agreements, which wound up the Franco-Algerian war and accorded Algeria independence. According to *The Economist* report the Algerian government's attitude to

the accords was to say the least eclectic.⁴⁵ The confiscation of French-owned land without prior compensation arrangement was quite contrary to the text of the agreement, but Ben Bella had explained that he had chosen to ignore the textual provisions on the grounds that it was not the text which counted, but the spirit in which it was applied. Parallels could be made with Zimbabwe when in 2000 the Mugabe regime began to confiscate white owned farms without compensation contrary to the text of the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979.

The Economist Intelligence Unit report in its assessment of opportunities for British firms in trade in Algeria concluded that there were no opportunities for British firms in the supply of consumer durables and other non-essential consumer items, owing to the collapse of the domestic market.⁴⁶ Though the market for cheap goods, such as textiles and processed foods had not been disrupted, it was very slack, in spite of Algerian efforts to diversify suppliers. Any sales effort made in this direction would not pay off in the long run, because of the Algerian plans to create tariff and quota protected domestic industries in this general field. *The Economist* went further to state that the prospects as regards equipment were better. Opportunities in this area mostly lay in the supply of equipment to the government and public corporations, especially textile and steel mills, shoemaking plants and some types of agricultural machinery.⁴⁷ The British firm Mather and Platt was already negotiating an agreement with the government, with regard to the setting up of a textile mill. As regards opportunities in Algerian public works, *The Economist* report concluded that these were little or non-existent because Algerian contractors were working below capacity and tenders were now only offered to local firms.⁴⁸

The annual British review of 1963 contained in the report by Evans from Algiers stated that the year proved to be one of "leap forward" in Algerian socialism and ended with a pause for consolidation.⁴⁹ Algerians had had socialism thrust upon them. This was as a consequence of the exodus of French farmers in 1962 which left the Government with no alternative but to acquiesce in the peasants taking over the farms. In 1963 the half-hearted management of many enterprises by French and also Algerian industrialists compelled the Government to take them over. In both cases it was the absence of a long established Algerian middle class and the suspect character of the emergent bourgeoisie (many of whom had made their fortunes during the revolution) that made some form of socialism virtually inevitable; while in the absence of qualified cadres there was no alternative to autogestion.⁵⁰

The pause, however, was necessitated by the fact that it had become apparent for some time that the Algerian socialists had bitten off more than they could chew. The need for consolidation was explained by Bachir Boumaza, the Minister of National Economy, in a remarkable speech which he had delivered before the Chamber when presenting the 1964 Budget.⁵¹ He emphasised that during this period not only would the socialist sector be overhauled. The credit machinery, which had been devised to meet the needs of other times, would receive particular attention, although private and semi-private including foreign enterprises would be permitted to exist and even encouraged, provided they collaborated loyally in making possible the ultimate triumph of socialism. At the end of

the period of consolidation, which would, however, be a long one, private enterprise would wither away. Boumaza at the same time threw a good deal of light on the regime's ultimate aims and intentions. Their ambition was to set up a strong modern Socialist State, independent economically as well as politically. Full advantage was to be taken of the country's material and human potential, the oil and gas of the Sahara and the energy and skills of the people, many thousands of whom had worked in France. Algeria could not, he said, continue to be the classic colonialist market exporting raw materials.⁵² The new Algeria was to develop economic relations with Arab, African, Socialist as well as European countries, although geographically, proximity would favour the latter.

Boumaza stated further that during the consolidation period, France would continue to enjoy a special position, based on customs, preference for French goods and special currency arrangements, in return for which he clearly expected that Algeria would continue to enjoy French financial and technical aid. Similarly, he cautioned that preferential commercial arrangements with France would have to be replaced gradually by agreements with Arab, African, Socialist and European countries. The specific mention of the latter led the 1963 British annual review of Algeria to say that it was encouraging and that the United Kingdom should not miss any opportunity in ensuring the presence of her interests. This was in no way to oust French interests, but in order to prevent undue Communist participation in the Algerian market, whether in Algeria proper or in the Sahara. Britain had earlier on in the year offered Algeria a loan of half-a-million pounds sterling and promised credit facilities for the construction of a new oil-pipeline, which the Algerians wished to build and run themselves.⁵³ All these were indications to Britain that the Algerian leaders were in no doubt of the benevolent interest of the United Kingdom in Algeria's vital industrial sector.

In foreign policy by 1963 according to the British annual review, Algeria still adhered to her non-alignment policy. Algerian-American relations were now generally good. In case of her neighbours, Algerian-Moroccan relations had deteriorated, and culminated in October 1963 with the Algerian-Moroccan frontier war in which the former lost heavily. At the same time there was growing antipathy between Ben Bella and King Hassan II of Morocco. This was both personal as well as ideological. There was no doubt that the Algerian revolution was for export, and that Ben Bella preferred a Socialist republic to a Moroccan monarchy. And he was convinced that time was working for him, and seemed to be ready to help in the process through subversion rather than by military means.⁵⁴

This was not encouraging. In fact, although the political situation seemed stable, with no sign of a rift between Ben Bella and Boumedienne, the overall picture was gloomy. In British eyes inasmuch as the last months of 1962 saw growing disillusionment with independence, 1963 ended with the masses disillusionment with socialism.

This gloom was confirmed in 1964. The British annual review of the Algerian situation of 1964 did not make good reading. It portrayed a depressing picture of political dictatorship and the crushing of internal dissidence. The Algeria regime according to the review, during the course of the year strengthened its position and its mandate without resolving its own interior problems, it became more totalitarian in its technique and

contained the internal resistance to it.⁵⁵ The British official conclusion of an analysis of the situation in Algeria in 1964 was that the Government was under the strain of serious material problems and was intrinsically fissible.⁵⁶ And if things were to get really bad, British thinking was that Boumedienne's moment might arrive, though at the same time there was no sign of this yet. British officials further concluded that though by the end of the year the situation appeared to have stabilised, the future was still bleak. Though they admitted that it was difficult to make any extrapolation with confidence on the situation in Algeria, they thought that it was probable that the revolution would bluff its way on, but with nothing of credit to it. To these observers, Algeria was a country on the wrong path, whose economic, political and social fabric was collapsing.

Against this background, however, British-Algerian relations continued to improve. Relations with France were delicate, and those with the US were once again bad, despite the latter's aid. This was partly due to the fact that the United States was deeply involved at the points where Algerian emotions were mostly engaged, such as Cuba and the Congo.⁵⁷ Britain by contrast, had managed to evolve an acceptable image of willingness to do business and keep off politics. Two major events in the economic development of Algeria happened in 1964. One was the gas liquefaction project which was completed and the third oil pipeline was started. Britain was the principal client for one and was constructing the other. The pipeline being built was between Hassi-Messaoud and Arzew.⁵⁸ A contract for the building of this pipeline was placed with Constructors John Brown of London. This was a consortium of British merchant banks, led by Kleinwort, Benson Limited, and they made a loan of £18.6 million repayable in eleven years at 5.5 per cent interest over the first seven years.⁵⁹ British participation in this venture led to the first overseas purchase of Algerian gas, to supply London. A fifteen-year contract was signed with the British Gas Council for the delivery of about one billion cubic metres annually; two methane tankers of 12,000 tons each were specifically built to transport it.⁶⁰ The pipeline, in particular, touched the point at which Algeria wished to diversify her economic dependence on France, while retaining Western markets and methods. Britain felt that she was fairly well placed to carry this relationship forward.

Military takeovers are generally regarded as anathemas or taboos in the vocabulary of the international community. What is surprising and even arousing curiosity was the lukewarm response or indifference that the Algerian coup of 19 June 1965 generated. Not only were the Algerians surprised by the sudden turn of events; so was the international community. Commenting on the coup the *Spectator* said it had no motive other than the personal rivalry between Ben Bella and Boumedienne,⁶¹ that had always been marked. The *New Statesman* referred to it as the quiet revolution because even the early riser of Algiers did not realise that it was happening.⁶² Even the resistance to it was sporadic and showed no enthusiasm for the former president. According to *The Times*, Colonel Houari Boumedienne was always the power behind the throne in the new Algeria. And he had not had the look of a man content with the role of kingmaker.⁶³ The paper stated that it was Boumedienne who put Ben Bella in the Algerian presidency and kept him there as long as it suited his purpose. The *Guardian* for its part referred to Boumedienne as the quiet man who carried out the coup.⁶⁴ It argued that the colonel feared that he was gradually to be divested of his power and it appeared essential to him

to organise a military coup while he was in a position of authority. For the *putsch* to be successful, it had to be organised before the Afro-Asian conference in Algiers, however inconvenient this might be to many of the delegations attending it because Ben Bella's prestige as host to so many important Heads of State would have greatly increased his stature both at home and abroad.

British government authorities were kept abreast of the developments in Algeria immediately after the coup by their diplomatic missions in North Africa, France and Washington. The British embassy in Algiers reported that from many of its sources it had come to the conclusion that the coup was motivated by personal rivalry between Ben Bella and his colleagues.⁶⁵ The former was alleged to be consciously or unconsciously driving the country towards Communism and away from Islam, trampling on his colleagues, humiliating them and ignoring their advice.⁶⁶ In taking his decisions, Ben Bella was motivated primarily by desire to enhance his own position, and acted without consulting his colleagues. For example, his decision to sign a cease-fire with the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) might or might not have been justified, but no one else was consulted. His policy towards leading dissidents was considered generally confused and again motivated by considerations of personal prestige.⁶⁷ It was further reported that Ben Bella had been trying to demote Boumedienne and Bouteflika in the hierarchy and lessen their influence. Even his attitude towards the party he had created had not done him good because he had antagonised the party ideologues by maintaining that the party was only the means to an end.

From Paris, the British Ambassador Sir P. Reilly reported that the French seemed to have been taken by surprise by the Algerian *coup d'etat*.⁶⁸ Though they had noted tension between Ben Bella and Bouteflika they had seen no concrete evidence of recent fundamental disagreement between Ben Bella and the Army. Even French politicians such as Mendes-France who had recently been to Algiers reported that he had noticed no sign of unrest and that Ben Bella had seemed to be at ease and full of confidence.⁶⁹ But the Quai d'Orsay admitted that early in June they had heard reports to the effect that United States sources had evidence that the army coup was being prepared.⁷⁰ The Paris briefing further states that reaction among left-wing Algerians in France were strongly anti-Boumedienne: they called him a fascist adventurer. The French had taken note of the fact that the new Algerian regime wished to continue to cooperate with France, although they had also taken note of the fact that Boumedienne had criticised the Evian agreements for giving too much to France. The French Council of Ministers on 23 June 1965 agreed that the events which had taken place inside Algeria in no way modified the relations between France and Algeria,⁷¹ and that there should be a continuation of the previous cooperation. This was symbolised that morning by the departure of oil experts who were going to put finishing touches to the agreement on hydrocarbons.⁷² What was important was the interdependence between the two countries no matter who governed.

From Washington, the Ambassador there Sir P. Dean briefed the Foreign Office on the United States preliminary assessment of the new regime. The United States thought that the new regime might be marginally less ill-disposed towards the White House than the previous one.⁷³ The State Department's North African section was instructed to call on

Bouteflika and inform him of the United States Government's desire to conduct normal business with the new regime.⁷⁴ The Americans did not think that a formal act of recognition should be necessary unless the Algerians asked for it. A Foreign Office telegram to Washington stated that there seemed no doubt that the new Government was in effective control of the territory and there was unlikely to be any mass disobedience on the part of the Algerian population, despite the few demonstrations that still continued.⁷⁵ The letter stated that instructions were about to be issued authorising Her Majesty's Ambassador in Algiers to deal with the new Government in the normal way, in the knowledge that to do so would afford recognition of it.

A British summary of the consequences for Algeria of the recent downfall of Ben Bella prepared by Sir Thomas Bromley in Algiers concluded that there was a possible change of emphasis in relations with the Arab world and Black Africa by the new administration. Algeria was likely to remain a supporter of Arab unity, but Egypt could not expect to have the same influence it had in Algeria under Ben Bella. The new Algerian government, Bromley's report stated was also likely to reduce its interest in Black Africa. Algeria would remain committed to African unity and to the support of liberation movements, but representatives of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) were now worried about their future under the new regime.⁷⁶ The ANC and other liberation movements in Africa had been extravagantly receiving aid from Ben Bella's government. The ANC's fears however, were soon allayed. Arslan Humbaraci has contended that the foreign policy of Boumedienne's government over the post-coup period was consistent on the whole with Bouteflika's statement on 20 June 1965: "the era of noisy speeches, vulgar catchwords and of impulsive frenzy was over."⁷⁷ A manifestation of a more sober foreign policy was discernable in Algeria's contacts with the "liberation movements," many of which had been indiscriminately encouraged by the Ben Bella regime. Boumedienne confined his attention to the more serious and stable among them such as : the ANC of South Africa and FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) in Mozambique.⁷⁸ These continued to receive aid from Algeria, but such aid was now given with much less ostentation than under Ben Bella. Apart from Africa, the British summary on Ben Bella's downfall further stated that relations with the West in general and France in particular were unlikely to be affected. As for Anglo-Algerian relations there was no danger to it and to the former's commercial and other interests.⁷⁹ So, Her Majesty's Government had now decided to carry on business as usual, as this was perceived as the right policy to pursue.

f. Conclusion

Although the Evian accords concluded the Algerian war and resulted in her independence, the Algeria envisaged under the accords was not realised. This was due to the OAS terrorism and many Europeans left the country because they were not certain of their future under the Algerians whom they had fought so bitterly against. Algeria, thus lost the qualified French personnel who could have imparted their various expertise to Algeria's development. But the Algeria that the French left was not at peace with itself. The personal rivalries and animosities that had been concealed throughout the struggle now came to the fore. France had not left an Algeria with any democratic structures in

which the new Algerian leaders could build on; this was one of the main contrasting features of French decolonisation to the British one. Failure on the part of the Algerian leaders themselves to realise their differences and acknowledge that everyone of them had made a contribution to the liberation in whatever form exacerbated and entrenched this lack of a democratic culture. The consequence of this was the emergence of leaders who wanted to arrogate power to themselves and became myopic ideologues bent on settling old scores at the expense of the nation. The outcome was the coup of 1965.

France developed a new relationship with Algeria along the same lines that she developed ties with Black Africa. Since Algeria was a special case during the colonial period, even the relationship entered into or maintained after decolonisation was unique in the sense that France signed multiple agreements of cooperation with Algeria because she had a variety of interests. Some of these treaties led to incidents of friction as they seemed to infringe upon Algeria's integral sovereignty. Britain on the other hand, after her successful decolonisation of most of British Africa in the relatively peaceful atmosphere of the 1960s, strove hard to keep away from politics in her dealings with the new Algerian government. London established diplomatic relations, as would normally be the case between two equal sovereign independent states. Furthermore, despite the deteriorating social, economic and political situation in Algeria, worsening relations with the United States, over-dependence on France, Britain on the other hand was making good out of the situation, as Algeria became a relatively important trading partner. In the wider picture of international relations in the era of decolonisation and the Cold War, this relatively quiet end to the Algerian affair was in keeping with the general outcome of empire, in which the case for decolonisation as a means of keeping the Third World either in the Western camp or out of the Soviet camp had prevailed over the maintenance of colonial rule as a means to the same end. Only South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were left to maintain the position that Algeria had proved to be impossible, and to find out for themselves that it was so. It was ironic that 1965, which effectively concluded the Algerian war with an end to the power struggle it had left behind, saw the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Southern Rhodesia and the beginning of "Britain's Algeria": except that, in this case the metropolitan power was not only excluded by the settlers, but refused to intervene by other than diplomatic means and economic sanctions.

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Epilogue -Literature Review

What follows now is a brief survey of some of the secondary literature around the subject published during or after the war in English, that gives an idea of the way that Algeria was viewed at the time in the Anglo-American world, views that became the starting-point of the controversy over the war that has continued to the present day.

The wartime literature began with the publication of *A Survey of North West Africa (the Maghrib)* by Nevill Barbour who used to work for the Eastern Services of the BBC. He tackled the question of "statehood" or "nationhood" which some writers had concluded was lacking in Algeria. He concurred with the Algerian nationalist writer, Mustefa Lacheraf, who argued that Algeria had always been a living entity, not an object as some claimed.¹ Barbour stated that no one could deny that an Algerian fatherland existed before, which was why most Algerians took up arms and laid down their lives to save it from the French. The struggle signified a revival of a society that had gone into a period of convalescence from 1871 to the 1920s. After the Philippeville massacres as a result of which he said "a moat of blood was dug between the two communities," he expressed some pessimism about the whole conflict being solved through peaceful means.²

Michael Clark a former correspondent of the *New York Times*, in his book, *Algeria in Turmoil: A History of the rebellion*, supported *Algerie française*. For him, the European Algerians wanted to defend their freedoms which were threatened by the Muslims.³ He believed the American public was being misled by the press about European Algerians. Clark argued that the French and Muslims could co-exist only under the French Republic. French methods of dealing with the rebellion to him were justified because France was fighting heartless terrorists who killed even innocent civilians, encouraged to do this from outside under the name of Arab nationalism. Henry Alleg's *The Question*, detailed the systematic use of torture by the French security police as a form of interrogation.⁴ The author argued that even the terrorism that the FLN was notoriously known for was the consequence of France's own doing, since the French had everything: soldiers, money and arms, as opposed to the rebels who had only the support of their people.⁵ With this imbalance the rebels had to resort to terrorism as the only means of defence.

Lorna Hahn's *North Africa: Nationalism to Nationhood*, had the blessing of an introduction penned by the famous John F. Kennedy who said the book was scholarly and of great public service.⁶ Kennedy stated that the Algerian war had a great influence because its repercussions could be felt in the West. This resulted in the souring of relations between the West and the rest of Africa, while Algeria and North Africa would be of strategic importance in the Cold War.⁷ Hahn argued that the war was started by young people who were impatient with change, as they also felt their leadership was slow in taking drastic action.⁸ Those young people who started the Algerian war were partly inspired in the spring of 1947 by the speech by President Harry Truman, promising assistance to peoples fighting for freedom. Hahn further argued that the Algerian "nation" had long existed, evidenced by the way the majority of the Muslim people rallied to the FLN's call. However, the propaganda campaign perhaps encouraged more than a necessary amount of intimidation and terrorism.⁹

Joan Gillespie's *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, continued along the lines of Barbour and Hahn that Algerian nationalism had long existed. For her, the Muslims had a strong historical and cultural tradition which went far beyond the limits of Algeria.¹⁰ She criticised the American government for being silent for so long about the dreadful Algerian conflict, with the result that the American public was led to think that no United States interests were at stake.¹¹ She contended that concrete United States interests of a long term nature were in the balance. North Africa was a strategic NATO complex of Mediterranean bases vital to US security.¹² She condemned American military and economic support for France and that American bombs and guns were used to kill defenceless Algerians.

In *Ordeal in Algeria*, Richard and Joan Brace argued that the 1958 Gaullist *coup d'etat* in France opened the world to the Algerian question.¹³ The book tried to present the Algerian rebellion from the European, American and Arab perspectives. The authors contend that the failure of France and West generally to solve the Algerian question increased the chances of Algeria slipping from the Western-oriented Maghrib, away from the benevolent influence of Morocco and Tunisia towards the East.¹⁴ The relationship between NATO and France was shown to have been complicated by this war with the alliance being held at ransom by France which used the conflict to get help in return for agreeing to NATO programmes. Both authors are American and are very critical of their country's economic and military support for France, despite preaching self-determination of the oppressed peoples of the world. The book further showed the division in American political life in the sense that not all Americans were aware of the gravity of the conflict and even those who were, differed in their opinions on the way forward in dealing with the Algerian issue. For instance, by 1957, the Democratic Party Senator for Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy (later President) became a leading figure advocating Algerian independence, but not all his Democratic Party colleagues supported his views on this issue.¹⁵ On the other hand, the Republican Eisenhower administration, whose vice-president Richard Nixon had visited North Africa in March 1957, was indifferent to or merely paid lip service to the Algerian question.

The Anglo-American Predicament : The British Commonwealth and European Unity, by H.C. Allen, Commonwealth Fund Professor of American History in the University of London, addressed both the British and American peoples.¹⁶ The book is divided into three parts. Part One is especially addressed to Great Britain; Part Two to the United States; and Part Three to both nations, as well as to the free world in general. The thesis of the book was the imperative necessity of a federal Atlantic Union, both to strengthen the West in its struggle with Communism, and to fortify the democracy, and develop fully the prosperity of the free world. It pronounced that only a united Anglo-American determination could actually bring this into existence. In the case of France, she was for a long time characterised by internal political instability, which resulted in her failure to defend her people when World War II broke out. But France was redeemed during the course of the War by the proud inspiration of General de Gaulle, who led her to a sense of "nationhood," only to be rejected when the war was over by politicians of his country, who re-established, under the guise of the Fourth Republic, the spirit and many of the

institutions of the Third Republic. Thus, in the 1950s, France was faced with a problem so grave and so charged with emotion in Algeria that only the most vigorous action could hope to solve it. France, once again, turned to the greatest of contemporary Frenchmen, de Gaulle, whose policies almost all observers abroad most ardently prayed could solve the Algerian problem.¹⁷ As a result of France's political history which was dominated by both domestic and foreign violence, Britain was urged to be cautious in entering a European political union, with France as a member, since stability could not be guaranteed.

Tanya Matthews was correspondent of *The Birmingham Post* based in Tunis, and her book *The Algerian A.B.C.*, had the foreword written by M'hammed Yazid, Minister of Information, Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, who stated that the independence of Algeria did not rule out future co-operation with France.¹⁸ Co-operation would be fruitful, particularly in the economic and cultural field and it would also be in the interests of the two peoples. Tanya Matthews was Russian-born, but married in Britain. She compared French Algeria to the Russia of Joseph Stalin. For instance, in Stalin's Russia, one could hardly find a family without a relation or a friend who had been arrested or questioned on a political charge or sent to a concentration camp.¹⁹ In Algeria, likewise, one could find very few Muslim families without members or friends who had either been arrested, imprisoned or regrouped, or otherwise killed or tortured in search of information.²⁰ Generally, the book attempts to examine the origins and history of the Algerian war. It covered the nature and origins of Algeria, French conquest in 1830, the subsequent European colonisation ; with the growing demands by Algerian Muslims for a greater part in running the country and the rejection or deformation of these demands under pressure from the European settlers. Finally, it dealt with the outbreak and development of the rebellion and various attempts to solve it.

David Schoenbrun wrote an introduction to Jules Roy's, *The War in Algeria*, in which he contended that France's problems were America's too. The failure of France to bring an honourable peace to Algeria was also America's failure.²¹ The United States was in a dilemma because while France was a vital NATO ally, at the same time, the US championed the freedom of the oppressed people of the Third World and was supplying the French with helicopters and bombs to hunt the rebels. He argued that if the United States dissociated itself from France, it risked the break-up of the Atlantic alliance. Surely, he argued, it would have been absurd to save North Africa and lose the North Atlantic.²² On the whole, the book dealt with the fighting in Algeria and was critical of the settlers and the army in Algeria. Benoist Rey *The Throat Cutters*, whose translation was by G. Lobbenberg, told mainly of the atrocities committed by the French in Algeria, but it should be pointed out that it also details atrocities committed by Algerians themselves often against their own people, and even against children.²³ The events in France and Algeria are said to be terrifying and reminiscent of Germany in the early 1930s, of the conditions that gave Hitler his chance.²⁴ The author viewed the situation in Algeria and France as having posed a greater peril to the world than the possession of nuclear weapons.

The Algerian Problem, by the British journalist, Edward Behr, Paris and North African

correspondent of *Reuters* and *Time Magazine*, argued that the idea of a true "Algerian nation" began after 1945, but that does not mean the inhabitants had been docile objects of their more advanced and organised previous colonisers such as the Phoenicians, Romans, Spanish, Turkish or French.²⁵ They were often on the brink of rebellion, but the segmented nature of the society and inter-clan rivalry always made them easy victims. The outbreak of the rebellion was blamed on the divided post-World War II governments in France. The irresponsible National Assembly was consequently no longer able to initiate and execute a given policy overseas.²⁶ The result was that the Fourth Republic was characterised by a lack of discipline at all levels of administration, and everything was left to the army and hardline colons. The Fourth Republic failed to accept the realities of the Algerian problem. The only window of opportunity was provided by the coming into power of General de Gaulle in May 1958. Behr argued that for many years, French public opinion was blinded in its attitude to the Algerian problem by French politicians. It was the coming to power of the father figure, de Gaulle, that started to open up the Algerian problem to the French public. Although de Gaulle's tactics might have prolonged the war and given false impression to the French settlers in Algeria, he nevertheless succeeded in "demystifying" the Algerian problem such that all sane French people came to realise they must be prepared to recognise and even talk to the rebels.²⁷ Despite pessimism over the outcome of the negotiations, at least the first steps had been put in motion.

In *France and Algeria : Complementary Enemies*, by Germaine Tillion, the Algerian problem is defined as complex, with economic and political aspects affecting both Europeans and Muslims.²⁸ In relation to the economic aspect, the author argued that France alone could find solutions to it. Politically, however, the solution was out of France's hands. Both Algeria and France were part of the solution, and were mutually dependent. Neither of the two societies could have its own way without taking into account the wishes of the other. By the end of 1956, the FLN had mobilised the majority of the Muslim masses to its side and under almost every Muslim society there was a structure set up to support the revolution.²⁹ Of course, one could argue about the existence or non-existence of the Algerian nationality during this or that period of history, but after six years of war, the Algerian nation was a reality and the French were the ones who forged it and helped it to grow.³⁰

A Scattering of Dust, by Herb Greer, an American photographer/ journalist, was based upon his experience of two winter clandestine visits to the FLN reporting the war from the rebel side. The author made clear his admiration for the rebels and sympathised with them. The FLN admitted that at times they murdered women and children but their main targets were French soldiers and traitors. The rebels criticised the Americans for helping France with money and arms.³¹ They were also suspicious of American interest in their cause, suspecting they were interested mainly in oil. The rebels refuted the charge that they were communists, viewing theirs as a struggle for political independence.³² They further refuted the claim that they were fighting a holy war. To them that was another French invention to win American support.³³ It was during these visits to, and travels with the rebels that Greer saw that they were not in agreement as to what to do with the country once victory was achieved, in terms of political development. He saw that this

would be one contentious issue and indeed it brought the country to the brink of civil war in the summer of 1962 and the post-independence uncertainty that followed and threw the country into the morass that afflicted it for the better part of the twentieth century.

Arslan Humbaraci's, *Algeria: A Revolution That Failed: A Political History Since 1954*, expressed disillusionment with independent Algeria. The work of a Turkish journalist who had followed the Algerian war in every aspect and was sympathetic to the FLN's cause. He considered the FLN as a band of brothers (*ikhwan*), a race apart, outstanding in Africa and the Middle East: a race formed in the toughest of all schools.³⁴ They deserved respect and support, and were enthusiastic for their cause and their conduct in fighting for it was very impressive. His disillusionment set in, when at independence he saw the lack of unity among the Algerian revolutionaries, and their thirst for power allowed the political and military groups to overcome all other considerations.³⁵ Algeria had by 1966 become a police state no better than before. Humbaraci's book is evidence of the disappointment felt abroad at the outcome of the war.

The attitude of Her Majesty's Government, that the Algerian affair was effectively closed in 1962, is nevertheless reflected in Alistair Horne's major history, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* of 1977, which regards the outcome as definitive and on the whole satisfactory, and thus relegates the war to history. It was the first complete account of the war in English and aroused a lot of controversy. Horne's book was a comprehensive narrative, well-balanced, and well written as an episode of French rather than Algerian history. It is a centre piece whose judgements are in terms of cause and effect rather than right or wrong. He argued that it was a "war of peace" in that no declaration of hostilities was ever made, and during most of the eight years the vast majority of Frenchmen lived unaffected by it.³⁶ Equally, it was undeniably and horribly savage, bringing death to an estimated one million Muslim Algerians and the expulsion from their homes of approximately the same number of European settlers.³⁷ Though at the time of its first publication, the book was regarded as the last word on the Algerian war, in effect, it turned out to open a new debate over the war in the subsequent years. Only Elie Kedourie violently objected in his review of Horne in the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS); today, he may not have been proved right, but the disappointment of the 1960s has been justified. Forty years on, Algeria is still pretty much in a bad shape.

Martin Thomas, (Reader in International History, University of West of England, Bristol), in his book, *The French North African Crisis : Colonial Breakdown and Anglo-French Relations, 1945-62*, has touched on the subject that this study discusses. The book was about France's North African crisis within the fabric of the western alliance and within France's partnership with Britain in particular.³⁸ Following closely behind Thomas's book was Irwin M. Wall's *France, the United States and the Algerian War*. The gist of the book was an American perspective of the Algerian war of independence. The book attempts to put the Algerian war in an international context, to deal with it as a world crisis and not simply a French one.³⁹ Wall contended that France was severely constrained in the prosecution of the war by international realities: the Cold War, Soviet ambitions in the Middle East and North Africa, and the attitudes of its European allies. But first and above all stood the problem of French relations with the United States.⁴⁰ His

argument revolved around the fact that contrary to what most historians have believed, de Gaulle instead intended to keep Algeria French, that he never meant to disappoint the hopes of the constituencies which had brought him to power, and that the Algerian War underlay practically all his diplomatic initiatives from 1958 to 1962, which were designed to achieve that end. He argued further that the major reason for the failure of de Gaulle's diplomatic initiatives from 1958 to 1962 was his inability to convince the Americans to cooperate with him; only then did he begin to think about diplomatic "independence."⁴¹

Endnotes

1. Nevill Barbour, *A Survey of North West Africa (the Maghrib)*, London, Oxford University Press, 1959, p.214.
2. *Ibid.*, p.231.
3. Michael K. Clark, *Algeria in Turmoil : A History of the Rebellion*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1960, pp.xii-xiii.
4. Henri Alleg, *The Question*, London, John Calder, 1961, p.64.
5. *Ibid.*, p.73.
6. Lorna Hahn, *North Africa: Nationalism to Nationhood*, Washington D.C., Public Affairs Press, 1960, p.v.
7. *Ibid.*, p.v.
8. *Ibid.*, p.154.
9. *Ibid.*, p.158.
10. Joan Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, London, Ernest Benn Limited, 1960, p. 172.
11. *Ibid.*, p.177.
12. *Ibid.*, p.177.
13. Richard and Joan Brace, *Ordeal in Algeria*, New Jersey, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1960, p.v.
14. *Ibid.*, p.vii.
15. *Ibid.*, pp.155-170.

16. H.C. Allen, *The Anglo-American Predicament: The British Commonwealth and European Unity*, London, Macmillan, 1960, p.xi.
17. *Ibid.*, p.72.
18. Tanya Matthews, *Algerian A.B.C.*, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1961, p.ix.
19. *Ibid.*, p.xii.
20. *Ibid.*, p.xii.
21. Jules Roy, *The War in Algeria*, New York, Grove Press, 1961, p.8.
22. *Ibid.*, p.8.
23. Benoist Rey, *The Throat Cutters*, London, John Calder, 1961, p.1.
24. *Ibid.*, p.2.
25. Edward Behr, *The Algerian Problem*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1961, p.14.
26. *Ibid.*, p.65.
27. *Ibid.*, p.216.
28. Germaine Tillion, *France and Algeria: Complementary Enemies*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, 1961, p.4.
29. *Ibid.*, p.9.
30. *Ibid.*, p.175.
31. Herb Greer, *A Scattering of Dust*, London, Hutchinson and Co. Limited, 1962, p.34.
32. *Ibid.*, p.34.
33. *Ibid.*, p.37.
34. Arslan Humbaraci, *Algeria: A Revolution That Failed: A Political History Since 1954*, London, Pall Mall, 1966, p.3.
35. *Ibid.*, p.5.

36. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, London, Macmillan, 1977, p.12.
37. *Ibid.*, p.12.
38. Martin Thomas, *The French North African Crisis: Colonial Breakdown and Anglo-French Relations, 1945-62*, London, Macmillan, 2000, p.vii.
39. Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian War*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001, p.3.
40. *Ibid.*, p.3.
41. *Ibid.*, p.xiii.
42. I am greatly indebted to Dr.Michael Brett's two articles, namely, "Anglo-Saxon Attitudes: The Algerian War of Independence in Retrospect," *Journal of African History*, Vol.35, 1994, pp. 217-35 and "The Algerian War Through the Prism of Anglo-Saxon Literature, 1954-1966," in Martin S. Alexander *et al* (eds), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962. Experiences, Images, Testimonies*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp.164-173. They provided me with the background to some of the authors of the books on this subject.

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